POLITICAL INDIA

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1832–1932

'I have also in mind the just claims of majorities and minorities, of men and women, of town dwellers and tillers of the soil, of landlords and tenants, of the strong and the weak, of the rich and the poor, of the races, castes and creeds of which the body politic is composed. For these things I care deeply.'

HIS MAJESTY THE KING-EMPEROR

AT THE OPENING OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE ON 12 NOVEMBER 1930.

'I am not unaware of the difficulties brought to light by a close examination of the great task to which you set your hands last year, but I bid you not to let them discourage nor oppress you, and I earnestly trust that under your guidance the great communities of India will pursue with patience and forbearance the path of co-operation and of peaceful discussion to which your endeavours have so clearly shown the way.'

HIS MAJESTY THE KING-EMPEROR

AT THE CLOSE OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE ON 1 DECEMBER 1931.

History of India

POLITICAL INDIA
1832–1932

A CO-OPERATIVE SURVEY OF A CENTURY

Edited by

SIR JOHN CUMMING
K.C.I.E., C.S.I.

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CONTENTS

PREFACE

POLITICAL INDIA is intended to be complementary to the co-operative survey of a number of prominent features of the Indian scene which was published in 1931 under the title *Modern India*. That book dealt with the machinery of government and with the material aspects of present-day Indian life and administration. This book gives a record of the evolution of political life in India. The sections into which the book is divided have been entrusted to twenty writers possessing special knowledge of their subjects.

The structure of the Indian constitution is still in the making. The general plan was drawn up in August 1917; the foundations have been laid, but much remains to be done before the coping-stone is placed in position. The writers of this book have endeavoured to appraise in a historical spirit the present alinement of political forces. Their origins go back many centuries, but their visible life, in most cases, extends over a period of less than fifty years. The Hindus were first in the field: the Indian National Congress held its first annual meeting in 1885. Most of the moderate and liberal organizations did not come into being until the Congress, having started as a critic of the administration, showed signs of becoming actively hostile to the Government. The Muhammadans did not find it necessary to organize themselves politically till 1906, when the foreshadowing of the coming of elected legislatures aroused their self-protective instincts. It was ten or twelve years later that the smaller communities—the Sikhs, the Christians, the Europeans, and the Anglo-Indians—began to assert themselves, and the political awakening of the women and of the depressed classes is

still more recent. An account of the development of political activity among all these classes and of the growth of the legislatures will be found in this book, which also contains short biographies of some of those who have played a leading part in the recent political history of their country. A description is given of the various subversive movements of the last quarter of a century. In view of the political reactions in India a chapter on Indians overseas has been included. The position of the Indian Princes and the developments which brought federation within the range of practical discussion are then described; and a narrative of the happenings at the Round Table Conferences of 1930 and 1931 leads up to a survey of the present situation.

In a book of this kind, the object of which is to describe fairly the present as based on the past, a certain amount of overlapping is inevitable, if a proper understanding is to be obtained of the curious cross-currents which from time to time have disturbed the flow of the main stream. No writer is responsible for the views of any other contributor.

The Editor desires to express his great indebtedness to all contributors and to the Oxford University Press for their cordial assistance, and his sincere appreciation of the constant help and valuable advice received from Sir John Kerr, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E.

7th November 1932.

Chapter I

THE EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL LIFE IN INDIA

By THE RT. HON. LORD IRWIN, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

[Lord Irwin, the grandson of Sir Charles Wood, the first Secretary of State for India, was Viceroy and Governor-General of India from 1926 to 1931. During his term of office the Statutory Commission under Sir John Simon held its inquiries into the working of the political constitution of India, and it fell to Lord Irwin to make arrangements in India for the meetings of the Round Table Conference in London. He is now in the Cabinet of the British National Government as President of the Board of Education.]

THE Indian political situation confronts the people of that country with new conditions, gravely disturbing the superficial tranquillity of the ancient order of their life. To the government of this country it presents a series of severely practical and immensely difficult problems which call imperatively for solution. In the treatment of these public opinion will count for much, and this book is an attempt to assist it by making some appraisement of the forces which have created the present situation, since only through knowledge of the development of a country's political consciousness can it be seen how and why ideas have come to be continuously translated into the organized action which we call practical politics or the political situation.

The title of this introductory chapter itself suggests a preliminary question. We know that India was the home of a peculiarly noteworthy and splendid civilization centuries before the beginning of the Christian era. At least from the days of the great king Asoka, until the anarchy of the eighteenth century and the rise in India of the British power, there were monarchs ruling over greater or lesser areas of modern India whose courts were

the centre of brilliant life, and sometimes of a learning and culture challenging comparison with any of their contemporaries. Did all the centuries which lie between the wonderful flowering of the Maurya civilization twenty-two hundred and more years ago, and the first beginnings of her modern political life in the mid-nineteenth century, produce in India no effective instrument for the transmission of its influence, its experience, and its institutions? To this question the reader who cares to pursue the matter in the literature of Indian polemics will find many and varied answers, and before we can give any reply to it here we must define our terms and be certain what we mean by political life.

For the purpose of this book, these two words can have only the meaning that they have for us here in England. They must denote a range of activities of mind and body constantly devoted to the creation, development, and protection of nationality, through a corporate form of self-government, which, because of India's membership of the British Empire, will naturally tend to be of the parliamentary type, though by no means inevitably exactly of the same pattern as our own. If this be our definition, we shall see that our inquiry is concerned with the events and consequences of the past few decades rather than of centuries and millenniums. Wherever indeed men live together under any form of ordered government, there must of course be found some kind of political life. In the kingdoms of the Euphrates valley, for example, four thousand years and more ago, as in India throughout her history before the coming of the British, there was political life, frequently fertile and vigorous, but widely removed both in purpose and achievement from that which we are here concerned to discuss. For India from the beginning of recorded history, and before it, until the

eighteenth century, there was no continuity of development in political institutions or in national life. Country and people moved from one violent breach with the past to another. Indian history proceeded in a series of cataclysms, each of which seemed to render still more remote any prospect of attainment by India of conditions requisite for the emergence of true nationality. As far back as we can penetrate into Indian annals we meet those deep divisions between the several elements of the vast population within her borders, which still persist to constitute the most formidable obstacle to the fulfilment of Indian nationalist hopes. Even in the north, where it was at one time customary to think that the Aryans extirpated their predecessors and lived as a racially uniform people before the coming of the Muslims, there was in truth no such uniformity. Wave after wave of invaders—Medes, Persians, Bactrians, White Huns, Scythians, and others—came through the northern and north-western gates of India, bringing with them new influences, importing fresh ideas and unfamiliar institutions, and often destroying much of what had been built before them. Between the eighth and the eighteenth centuries, from the Arab invasions of Sind to Nadir Shah the Persian, the political life and fabric of all India, except the far south, was repeatedly dislocated by successive Muslim invasions. So catastrophic an experience gave scant scope for continuity of development; and India had small chance to evolve into a nation when perennial incursions were pouring into her borders such heterogeneous racial elements. Even the most mechanical of all the outward signs of nationality was denied to her. She was never, as a whole, subjected to one rule. Nor is she in the complete sense so subject even to-day, although the suzerainty of the Crown over the Indian States and the maintenance inviolate of the *pax*

Britannica, from one end of India to the other, gives her in effect the real, if not the formal, substance of this particular attribute of nationality. But in no sense did India as a whole feel this unifying influence before the coming of the British.

The consequence of this to her subsequent development was far reaching, for the reason that some conscious apprehension of the idea of nationality is indispensable to political growth. Nationality may be difficult of precise analysis, and a mere catalogue of its formal attributes would not take us very far. But there is no mistaking its effects. For its nature is dynamic, so that nationality is to a people what personality is to the individual, and to be a nation men and women must be capable of thinking and acting as a unit in all that matters most. In the last resort, they must be prepared to sink all differences of class, religion, and material interest for the sake of the common good. They must share the tradition of great deeds done in the past, and the present inspiration of common purpose. Thus nationality is a state, depending upon the spiritual power inherent in it to beget the conditions in which real politics can thrive; and so it follows in India, as elsewhere, that the emergence of something fairly to be described as national feeling is a prime necessity for the establishment of true political life. Only then can political life take shape in all its many forms, corresponding to the constituent parts of the national society and reflecting all their variety of origin and experience.

It is instructive in this connexion to study two of the most famous achievements of English Victorian scholarship; Sir Henry Maine's *Ancient Law* and Bishop Stubbs's *Constitutional History of England*. The latter begins with true Victorian thoroughness in the forests of Germany and traces the gradual unfolding of the primitive institu-

tions of our forefathers who made the England which William conquered, into the parliamentary government which our country knew on the eve of the modern age. Nowhere is there any violent break with or submergence of the past. The Normans only gave strength and elegance, scope and direction to the ruder organs of law and government which had served their Saxon predecessors. And if we continue the history from the point where Stubbs left it, we find the same process still in operation. All is evolution and adjustment to new needs and new conditions. The great Civil War itself was fought to ensure, and in the event did no more than ensure, that this process should be allowed to continue without interruption. From the meeting of uncivilized warriors under the oak trees to the world constitution of the Statute of Westminster is a long journey, but the road is continuous and the stages well marked.

Contrast with this the case of India where, to carry on our metaphor of the road, the bridges were never built, and the road itself was completely swept away from time to time by the torrents from the hills. Sir Henry Maine shows early India in possession of certain archaic Aryan institutions, similar, because akin—in the literal sense of the word—to our own primeval instruments of government. Who can doubt that, given the right conditions, these also might have grown into something rich and powerful, with the stamp of India and the Indian character on them? But this was not to be, and we may well ask how it would have fared with England if the natural forces at work had not been able to exert their unifying influence, and instead of the different invading races fusing into one homogeneous people, some had remained alongside others, jealously retaining their own integrity, in the separation of distinct tradition and

discordant interest. In such circumstances, England herself might well have remained in the state of heptarchy until brought to an artificial unity by some outside power, and then held, through years, suspended in her development, awaiting liberation of the forces ultimately making for effective unity. Yet that is exactly what has happened in India, and all that has survived of the rich promise of the first Aryan political genius are the little village councils in some parts of India, the arrested germs as it were of parliaments which might have been, and now the object of scientific study, much as atrophied organs in the human body, which once were vital parts in the structure of ancestors very different from ourselves, to-day engage the attention of physiologists.

It is necessary to appreciate this background to the growth of political life in India, because otherwise there is danger that our thought, being based on faulty premisses, will be directed towards wrong objectives. Much of the current controversy in both India and this country assumes that recent political developments in India represent a violent break with India's past, an unnatural turning away from what is Indian, and from what is therefore more appropriate to Indian conditions and circumstances. If this were true, it would be a matter for anxious heart-searching on the part of all concerned, because then there would be an alternative to the purely British institutions and form of government which have been during recent years in process of establishment in India. Moreover, the alternative would be something home grown and acclimatized to the soil. But, since it is not true, the sooner the unreal alternative is dismissed, the more speedily and effectively will the way be open to the recognition of the real forces now governing the political life of India, and the easier will it be to guide

these into constructive channels where they may produce their legitimate effects.

It is none the less natural that there should be many persons in this country who feel grave doubt whether any form of government, other than autocratic rule, will eventually prove suitable for India, and who accordingly evince profound anxiety over the present attempt to develop for India parliamentary or quasi-parliamentary institutions. These doubts deserve respect, but they must be weighed against the other courses that conceivably lie open. I venture to quote some words I used in the inaugural Massey Lecture on the Indian problem which I delivered in Toronto a short time ago. Discussing the practical alternatives before the British rulers of India, I said:

'The very foundation of what we seek to do by way of training India to the practice of democratic institutions is condemned by some as alien to the temperament of the East. It is true that democracy, or an approach to it, involves in India delicate questions of franchise of quite peculiar difficulty, and rests ultimately upon a postulate of the value of personality which is largely exotic to Indian thought. But apart from the dominant influence exercised by the general example of constitutional development throughout the rest of the Empire, it is hard to see how Great Britain can evade the necessity of seeking a solution for India on lines not dissimilar.

'For what are the practicable alternatives? The Government of India might continue to be controlled as at present by Great Britain. Or, failing this, we might devise some form of government by an Indian autocracy or oligarchy. The first would be the avowal of failure and would imply abandonment of all hope of basing the future government of India upon Indian consent. The second could, for very adequate reasons, stand no chance of acceptance by either the British or the Indian peoples. It is opposed alike to the spirit of the times and to the whole political history of India as we ourselves have made it. Whatever therefore the difficulties in the path of the development of democratic government in India—and they are as formidable as they well can be—there is no escape from them.'

There is one other aspect of the subject which bears upon the present situation and deserves passing notice. For various reasons, as we have seen, the gradual organic process by which political institutions have been moulded in other lands has had small place in Indian history. The consequence has been that such institutions as India has to-day have been imported, almost entirely, from outside and, further, that these institutions, the principles on which they are based, and the ideas with which they are associated, have been imported into India when their development was already far advanced. It was inevitable therefore that their introduction into the virgin soil of India should produce reactions of a quality and strength vastly different from, and vastly greater than, those which would have been experienced from a slower and more natural growth. Here is a factor in the development of political life in India which must always be borne in mind for the light it throws upon many of the phenomena familiar in Indian politics. In one sense it may truly be said that the whole of India's political life rests to-day on a precarious basis. It is still, so to speak, in India but not of India. Before the Indian peoples now is the vital work of assimilating this development, of making the principles and ideas on which it is based their own, of giving its institutions and organs a specifically Indian form, of fashioning them to fit Indian conditions and ways of thought, and, above all, Indian character. We can no more give India a ready-made constitution than a midwife can give a woman a grown-up child of her own body. Every country must perfect the spirit of its own constitution out of its own being and traditions. No matter what the British have done in the past, or may do in the future, to foster the growth of institutions and reforms in India, these without the creative contribution that India alone

can supply will remain no more than adhesions on the great trunk of India's life. Their sap will not blend with hers, as blend it must, if the fruit borne is to be for the true healing of India's ills.

In the peculiar position of India, therefore, the future depends jointly upon her own people and the people of this country. It is essentially a task that must enlist the best energies of both in combination, or to use a better word in spite of its present-day controversial associations, in co-operation with each other. It is within the power of this country to introduce into the government of India the basic principles of national self-government, but it is for India to apply them to her own circumstances and gradually to convert them into a true reflection of herself.

In the later chapters of this book, both the history and the necessity of this dual effort will be amply illustrated, and for the reader who holds the key to its genesis and the conditions of its performance there is an infinite amount of informing experience to be studied. It is too commonly believed that the rule of the old East India Company was a mere commercial exploitation, and that the test of good administration and good government in those days was simply whether or not the result was financially profitable. Such a notion has little regard for history; for it is not difficult to show the extent to which the moral and material foundations of India's modern political life were firmly laid during the Company's régime. Exploitation no doubt there was, but its effects were transitory in comparison with the influence of another circumstance, which was the fact of India's membership of the British Empire. Students here and abroad are now beginning to appreciate the importance of this association, and to recognize through the last century and a half the operation of certain springs of political life which permeate all parts of the

Empire, and in which each shares according to the measure of its capacity to benefit from them.

The march of political progress throughout the Empire has been at varying pace but constantly in the same direction. From subordination to the Parliament of Great Britain it has led to that form of free association which we now call Dominion status. This term implies full autonomy and national status based on political forms which in their essence are those of British parliamentary government. The structure may vary; Great Britain is a unitary government, Canada and Australia are federations. Nevertheless, the British party system and cabinet government are the tap-root of the political life in these giant daughters of the mother country. And if the true beginnings of England's own modern political life are to be found in the revulsion against George III's attempt to govern as well as rule, the American Revolution may be held to be the first thunderclap of a far-reaching storm which was to sweep away much more than Lord North's ill-starred colonial policy. There was a great ferment of opinion in England, old and new, in those days; and it was no mere chance which laid the first foundations of political reform in India in those last three decades of the eighteenth century. For the Regulating Act of 1773 all but coincided in time with the affair at Lexington. That Act was passed within twenty years of Clive's consolidation of the Company's position at Plassey, and ten years later, Pitt's India Act brought Indian affairs definitely within the purview of Parliament. The decennial inquiries which preceded the renewal of the East India Company's Charter threw much-needed light on Indian affairs and, besides bringing steady improvement into Indian administration, led to the formal enunciation of the most fruitful of all political principles, namely, the equality of all individuals before

the law. Lastly, it is right to recall that it was during the Company's régime that Macaulay penned his minute on Indian education, the effects of which on the course of Indian political development have been incalculable. And thus we may justly claim for the old East India Company that even in those far-off days when a united India, still more a united self-governing India, could have been hardly more than the merest fantasy, its administration unconsciously laid foundations from which the modern constitutional life of India has grown.

For many years indeed after the Government of India passed from the Company to the Crown it is not easy to detect any essential difference in the actual character of the government of the country. It remained an autocracy, but an autocracy continually tempered by the introduction of institutions and principles of very different kind. Thus, almost immediately after the assumption of government by the Crown after the Mutiny, the first Indian Councils Act was passed to give Indians representation in their own government; and a generation later, in 1892, the Act was widened in order to give Indians a voice in choosing of whom that representation should consist. Between 1861 and 1892 is a long gap, but it was not wholly barren of constitutional achievement. Inside the Government of India itself various reforms and improvements were in progress, particularly in the direction of the devolution of greater administrative powers to the provinces, thus liberating the element of local patriotism and spontaneous interest felt by men concerning those things which touch them most nearly in their daily lives. There is in fact visible throughout the last half of the nineteenth century a steadily growing political consciousness and concern as regards political matters inside the provinces, which historians of India not infrequently

overlook. Constitutional development in India is too often visualized as something superimposed upon the provinces and their people from above. But the long story of the relations between centre and provinces in India, certainly from Lord Mayo's time down to 1917, is useful in correcting so one-sided a perspective; and to-day it is probably true to say that the most vital political forces in India are in the provinces. Since the inauguration of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms in 1921, the provincial legislatures have been responsible for the administration of such important departments of government as education, local self-government, industrial development, medicine, and public health. This responsibility has been exercised through Ministers dismissable at the will of the legislatures, and in consequence the latter have become increasingly the arena in which many of the ablest and most practical Indian politicians have sought their career. By the nature of their work the provincial legislatures have been nearer to the electorate than the distant Indian central legislature, and have had a correspondingly greater influence on the political education of the Indian voter.

As the nineteenth century advanced, the pace of political development in India began to quicken. We have seen that over thirty years elapsed between the two Indian Councils Acts, but only about half that space of time was to elapse before another of the great milestones in India's political progress was to be reached with the Morley-Minto reforms. True, these introduced no new principles into the Government of India, but they greatly extended the working of those already in operation, and they gave, both at the centre and in the provinces, legislative bodies whose natures and powers may properly permit them to be considered the forerunners of the later more democratic legislatures.

The introduction of these dynamic principles and institutions into the Government of India is therefore closely linked with the general growth of responsible self-government throughout the Empire, not only in Great Britain herself, but in those other members of the Imperial society which we call Dominions. And the historian can show how every great step forward here and in the Dominions has been accompanied at a greater or lesser interval by a corresponding advance in India. The Charter Act of 1833 was the fruit of the first reformed Parliament of England. Lord Durham's epoch-making report, worthily implemented by his son-in-law, Lord Elgin, had made responsible self-government in Canada a reality in 1848. During the next ten or twelve years the same form of government was extended to all the major British colonies except one or two whose material development was not sufficiently advanced to enable them to receive it. And by 1861 these changes produced their effect, as we have seen, in India, where Lord Elgin, after the termination of his Canadian service, was now Viceroy. During the 'sixties, 'seventies, and 'eighties in England, the slow battle for the enfranchisement of the working classes in town and country was being fought and won, and Mr. Gladstone inaugurated his campaign for Home Rule in Ireland. Once more we see these stirrings of life in England reflected in the shape of the Indian Councils Bill of 1892. And lastly, the Morley-Minto reforms was the work of the Parliament that extended responsible self-government to the erstwhile Boer Republics of the Transvaal and Orange Free State.

None of these connexions are accidental. They are evidence of a common law of political progress for all parts of the British Empire, a law which operates generally and impartially in each instance as circumstances dictate

and justify. In India we have not hesitated to apply the principle of responsible self-government as she has become ready to accept its obligations. As late as 1909, Lord Morley could say that the reforms which bear his and Lord Minto's names were in no wise meant to be the first step to responsibility in the Government of India. Yet, within ten years, the War, and India's share in it, had wrought so great a change both upon her circumstances and upon public opinion outside India that Mr. Montagu's famous declaration on behalf of the Imperial Government of that day formally made responsible self-government for India within the Empire a goal of British purpose. Nor is it without significance, as illustrating the rapidity with which thought has moved from the ancient moorings, that in the elaborate building plans for the new capital of India at Delhi, prepared in the years immediately before the War, it should have been deemed unnecessary to provide any separate building for a central legislative body.

Meanwhile the spirit of change had been working upon many other sides of Indian life. Throughout the length and breadth of the great sub-continent, as between India and the farthest parts of the earth, great systems of communications had been devised, creating a single geographic and economic entity, closely connected with the life of the great world without. Within half a century, from an insignificant position in the world's economic life India rose to that of fifth or sixth among the trading nations. Not less prodigious than the growth of communications was the spread of education, particularly of British education, and just as railways, telegraphs, and roads united the four quarters of India in the material sense, so the spread of western knowledge was to give the political classes of India a common intellectual meeting-place. The people of India now found themselves not only able

to move from one end to the other of their country with ease and safety, but, what was far more significant, they found themselves able to share all the new movements of thought by which they were surrounded through the medium of a common language. And English is peculiarly the language of modern politics and modern freedom; for England is the mother of free government and free institutions. Indians found themselves able to drink of the waters of freedom from their fountain head, and the same language, which enabled them to do this, naturally served for the exchange of ideas, aspirations, and hopes; and for the expression of these not only to each other, and not only to their rulers, but to the world at large. The introduction by this means of India and of Indian affairs on to the world stage has been perhaps one of the most potent influences in transforming the conditions which made possible British rule in India on the old autocratic lines.

When Warren Hastings, the first and perhaps the greatest of the Governors-General, was leaving India in 1786, he reviewed the state of Bengal under his rule, and was able to say with truth, 'I have at least had the happiness to see one portion of the British dominion in India rise from the lowest state of degradation . . . enjoying the blessings of peace and internal security. . . .' And he was only one, if the most distinguished, of a long line of British administrators, who gave themselves ungrudgingly to secure the moral and material welfare of those committed to their charge. The monumental minutes which they wrote on education, and on judicial, police, or general administrative reform are taken from the shelf to-day only by curious students of the past. But when they were written they represented live thought and policy, and their results survive in much of the modern administrative system. And, all the while, their authors

were preparing for what was to come after, and for their share in which they are surely entitled to posthumous recognition. Sir William Marris, than whom few may speak on this subject with greater authority and knowledge, has not without justification prophesied a verdict by history that 'it cannot have been a bad autocracy which stimulated by precept and example those stirrings of spirit which confront us in India to-day'.[1]

Such in brief outline has been the contribution of the British people on their side of the co-operative task to which allusion was made at the outset of this chapter. What of the other, that which was to be contributed by the people of India? We should not fall into the common error of expecting too great or enthusiastic a response from the people of India to the developments and changes we have been discussing. All but a small proportion of them live on the soil, the great majority in tiny, remote, and for ages unprogressive villages, uneducated, and almost totally immersed in a grim struggle for the basic necessities of existence. They must always have been more concerned with the immediate interests and duties of daily life than with political matters outside their comprehension. The formation of the Indian National Congress in the middle 'eighties may be regarded as the most tangible evidence of the beginning of political life in India from the side of the Indians themselves. But even this owed its inception very largely to the energy and enthusiasm of a few Englishmen, of whom the most outstanding were Hume, Wedderburn, and Yule, and like all things of its kind it was the outcome of a preceding period of preparation. The famous controversy over the Ilbert Bill during Lord Ripon's viceroyalty was the concrete event which brought the Indian National Congress

[1] *Modern India* (1931), p. 63.

to birth. But it is obvious that the Ilbert Bill, proposing to reform the judicial procedure affecting the trial of Europeans, did not spring into being fully fledged. Clearly it must have been the outcome of a developing opinion in India among Indians, recognized by a reforming statesman like Lord Ripon. And, as a matter of fact, we can see this development in progress before 1880. One of the most interesting by-paths in the history of British India is the study of the evolution of the press, and particularly that portion of it which was Indian owned. At first the latter devoted by far the greater part of its attention to religious topics, but from 1860 onwards there is a steadily growing interest in politics. During the late 1870's this development flared up suddenly into an anti-government propaganda of a strangely modern type, requiring resort by the Government to exceptional press legislation. The second Afghan War, for example, was the occasion for very outspoken criticism of the British Government, particularly in Bengal, and this in itself marked the end of the period when Indians acquiesced without question in the doings of their hitherto omnipotent rulers. Thus well before the end of last century the leaven of political discontent, which is the reverse side of political aspiration, was at work; and it was this spirit which was increasingly to find utterance in the Indian National Congress. The history of Congress can be studied in the pages which follow, and here it is only relevant to point out how curiously this now world-famous and unquestionably powerful body, typifying the opposition of nationalist India to the present system of government, is the outcome of co-operation between British and Indians. Modelled upon the thought and example of the West, its whole organization and spirit are western, and the aims which it professes are those of western politics.

But though a good deal of the history of political life in India is bound up with the history of the Indian National Congress, Congress claims too much if it would arrogate to itself the whole of that history, for from its earliest days it has been mainly a Hindu body, and it has been therefore only natural that other communities should form their own organizations for both religious and political purposes. The stirrings of dry bones in India has caused other than purely political bodies to stand upright, and, as we now see to have been inevitable, political organization has largely adopted communal forms, leading to the formation of a number of bodies, purely communal in purpose and composition. The important thing about these various organizations is that, whatever else may be said about them, they are quite genuine productions of the political life in India, and themselves contribute very directly to its vitality and development. To a large extent they control and organize politics in India, that is, the politics of the central and provincial legislatures and of the various Indian groups or parties there represented. It is only since 1921, that is, since the inauguration of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, that such bodies as these have had a suitable platform for their activities; and during the past decade they have grown in numbers, in strength, and in experience. To what extent can it be said that they have assimilated the spirit and the technique of the political system of England from which they are derived? From one point of view it may fairly be argued that the spirit in which most of the organized political and quasi-political bodies in India have been conceived, and in which they now function, is not favourable to the development of a full political life in India. For in great part the forces which stir them are centrifugal. Their activities frequently tend to make rather for division than

for union. But this is not to say that communal associations are necessarily evil. They are not. On the contrary, they are natural developments, and they can evoke and sustain an organized enthusiasm as at present at any rate no other bodies can. But if they are to be a strength and not a weakness to the India of the future, they must lift their eyes beyond the immediate community sympathies and attachments that have so far been the main motive of their existence. And gradually, it must be hoped, the operation of responsibility in the political field will evoke the formation of true political parties, pledged to the promotion of real political programmes.

It is difficult to predict the lines on which such parties may emerge, and they will no doubt vary according to local circumstances in different parts of India. The Congress is at present hampered as regards becoming a political party in the generally accepted sense by the fact that hitherto its energies have been so largely directed to political agitation of a negative sort, and because it draws its support so predominantly from one community. While the desire for social betterment of the Indian masses is probably the strongest motive of action in the minds of Mr. Gandhi and many other of the Congress leaders, Congress can hardly as yet be said to have developed a practical programme that would stand the test of administrative responsibility. So far as any such programme has been attempted, it has been devised in crude terms, evidently chosen rather for their supposed propaganda value than for their practical merits as a serious contribution to political thought.

The old Indian Liberal party was an enlightened and far-sighted attempt to create a true political organization. In spite of the inclusion in its ranks of many of the most able men in Indian public life, it has up to the present

failed to achieve any wide popular influence because its doctrines and inspirations ran counter to the inter-communal antagonisms, which must still be acknowledged the strongest force in Indian politics.

Its history suggests that the Justice party will perhaps be the first to develop into a true non-communal party. Confined for years to Madras, where it has proved itself able to win elections and ministerial power in straight fights with Congress, it now flourishes in Bombay and the Central Provinces. In all these three provinces—Madras, Bombay, and the Central Provinces—the Justice party is powerful and is gaining strength. It stands midway between a true political party and a communal party, for it was founded at the beginning of this century to fight the cause of non-Brahmins in the Madras Presidency against the Brahmins, who then held a virtual monopoly of place and power. But it has never been exclusive, and the efforts of its present leaders are towards the inclusion of all who wish to join it on the basis of its present policy of social and economic reform. Brahmins, Europeans, Muslims, Depressed Classes, and Anglo-Indians are already numbered among its supporters, but it is still partly a 'communal' party inside the Hindu community. It may neverthless succeed to the mission of the old Liberal party, and its anti-Brahmin character gives it sufficient ground of appeal to the prevailing 'communal' spirit to invest it with a vigour which the more purely intellectual Liberal movement has lacked.

The work of all these political or quasi-political and communal bodies has already had an appreciable effect upon the general mind of India. The rules made under the Government of India Act of 1919 enfranchised millions of voters in every province; and a multiplicity of elections for central, provincial, and local bodies during the past

ten years has increasingly brought the electorate to understand something of the machinery and purpose of politics. The various non-co-operation or civil disobedience campaigns organized by Congress have had their effect in the country districts of many parts of India, and it is very much less true than a short time ago it might have been to say that the Indian peasant thinks only of religion and not at all of politics.

The economic conditions of post-war years have acted as an additional incentive to even the humblest in India no longer to accept without question the conditions under which he lives. Labour and the Depressed Classes are beginning to be organized, and their leaders are steadily working to turn the thoughts of urban and rural workers towards politics and the part which they can play in them. And the past few years have seen women eager to take part in political activities.

It is very evident that India is waking from her old political apathy and that in some directions she has begun to develop for herself healthy political organisms. But she has also developed some that are dangerous and unwholesome, and the next years are going to see a keen struggle between these for mastery. It is the purpose of this book to enable those who read it to form some judgement of the outstanding factors in the problem which affect the present welfare of India, and on the wise handling of which her future position in the British Empire and the world will assuredly depend.

Chapter II

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES FROM LORD WILLIAM BENTINCK'S EDUCATIONAL POLICY (1832) TO THE BIRTH OF THE CONGRESS PARTY (1884)

By PROFESSOR H. H. DODWELL, M.A.

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POLITICAL activity in the ordinary sense hardly emerged in India till the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The earlier period is marked mainly by the educational developments which prepared the country, or rather some sections of the population, for the political developments which occurred later. For a proper understanding of the part played by education in the matter, it is necessary to go back to the earlier period of the rule of the East India Company.

The political predominance of the Company may be dated from 1818, when the power of the Marathas fell to pieces and Lord Hastings extended the Company's alliance to every important State in India. Till then the Governors-General of the Company had been mainly occupied with protecting the Company's territories against external attack; but from that time onwards they exhibited a growing concern for other matters, especially education. Warren Hastings had already set up in Calcutta in 1781 a Muhammadan college; and Jonathan Duncan had established in 1792 a Sanskrit college at Benares. In 1813 the statute extending the privileges of the East India

Company for a further term of twenty years permitted the Company in future to set aside annually a sum of not less than 100,000 rupees for 'the revival and improvement of literature, and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India'. The motive power actuating this policy sprang in the main from religious and humanitarian ideas. Charles Grant, a prominent member of the Clapham sect and himself a distinguished servant of the East India Company, had laid in 1792 before the Court of Directors a pamphlet in which he dwelt upon the moral obligation of the British Government to do everything in its power to improve the social and moral condition of Bengal. He particularly emphasized the condition of women, many of whom were doomed to 'a violent and premature death', and 'the perpetual abasement and unlimited subjection' of the lower Hindu castes. These evils could, he urged, be removed only by education in English, which would open to the people a world of new ideas and break the strong bonds of custom. Even while Grant was engaged in setting forth these ideas, William Carey, the Baptist missionary, had arrived in Bengal and begun to carry them into practical effect. Unable to secure a permit from the Company, he sailed on a Danish vessel to India, and began work in 1799 at Serampur, the Danish settlement on the Hooghly, near Calcutta but outside the Company's jurisdiction. There he and his companions set up schools for European and Indian boys, founded a printing-press, and published books of the Bible in various Indian languages. Carey had a genius for languages, and in fact his work laid the foundation of modern Bengali prose. Alongside these missionary efforts was the secular work of David Hare, a watchmaker who

settled in Calcutta in 1800. Hare was a rationalist who rejected all religious dogma but believed with all his might that education was the one cure for all the evils from which society could suffer. He too, therefore, sought to extend education. He began by studying Bengali, but concluding that the existing literature in that tongue was unsuited to his purposes, he planned a school for the teaching of English to Indian boys. In this scheme he interested not only leading Europeans such as Chief Justice Sir Hyde East, but also a very notable Brahmin, Ram Mohan Roy. Thus the college afterwards known as the Hindu College was established. This institution in its earlier days was decidedly militant, and at least one of its early teachers promoted free thought in religion to the utmost of his power.

The Government had taken no part in these ventures, though it had set up a body known as the Committee of Public Instruction to administer the funds available under the Act of 1813. This body was speedily split by divergent opinions of policy. Was it to promote the revival of oriental learning or seek to spread the knowledge of the West? A considerable group of eminent servants of the Company favoured the former as the main object which should be sought; but in Calcutta itself there was a strong current of Indian opinion favouring the latter, and giving expression to its views in vigorous terms. Its leader was Ram Mohan Roy. Born in 1772, he had been employed in the revenue department and had studied English and other European languages as well as Sanskrit and Persian. He retired from service in 1814 and settled in Calcutta, where he at once formed a centre of religious discussion. He was a strong critic of the Hinduism of his day. He found that the people of Calcutta no longer observed the rites or the doctrines of the Hindu books, but contented

themselves with elaborate ceremonies and periodical pilgrimages. For a while Ram Mohan Roy frequented Unitarian services, but later adopted forms of his own and founded the body known as the Brahmo Samaj. He and his friends aimed above all else at getting rid of idolatrous ceremonial and the complications of the caste system. But they were also strong advocates of western education, and opposed the policy of reviving the classical knowledge of India. When it was thought that the Government was about to open a new Sanskrit college at Calcutta, Ram Mohan Roy protested in words which might have been written by Macaulay himself.

'The pupils will here acquire', he said, 'what was known two thousand years ago, with the addition of vain and empty subtilties since produced by speculative men. . . . The Sanskrit language, so difficult that almost a lifetime is necessary for its perfect acquisition, is well known to have been for ages a lamentable check on the diffusion of knowledge; and the learning concealed under this almost impervious veil is far from sufficient to reward the labour of acquiring it.'

The future course of educational policy was still undecided when in 1834 Macaulay, newly appointed to the Council of the Governor-General, arrived in India. He was at once appointed to be president of the Committee of Public Instruction, and, while his arguments did not lead the Committee to unanimity, they were at once adopted by the Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck. Macaulay, like Grant, Hare, and such Indians as Ram Mohan Roy, regarded the development of English education as the paramount duty of the Government. It was clear that English could be taught to a large number of Indian boys living in the chief centres of population. English would introduce to them the improved and swiftly growing knowledge of the West. The boys thus taught would, when they grew up, serve as interpreters of the new knowledge to the people at large, and thus in time India

would become occidentalized. The study of the Indian classics should not be positively discouraged, but was a minor and comparatively unimportant matter. The great purpose of Macaulay and his supporters was to establish the English language and literature at Calcutta in the predominant position which the Greek and Latin classics enjoyed at Oxford and Cambridge. In this way, they expected, a class of men would arise, Indian in blood and colour, but English in ideas and culture.

These proposals were stubbornly contested by the group which had been advocating the development of oriental studies. They felt strongly and rightly that it was unnatural and improper to attempt to transform Indians into Englishmen, even if that object could be achieved by the study of English literature and western knowledge; that English could never hold the place in Indian studies occupied by Greek and Latin in the West because there existed no organic connexion between English and the Indian literatures such as knit together modern European writings with those of the classical world; and they discredited the belief that the knowledge imparted to a necessarily small class of men would filter through to the Indian population at large in any measurable period of time. In these respects the opponents of Macaulay exhibited a far closer touch with realities than did the great rhetorician himself. But they lacked two of his advantages. They had no one with the literary skill to present their case with the persuasion which Macaulay commanded; nor did they include any individual who carried such weight in educational matters as did a man who had already made a name for his brilliant scholarship. On a point of land revenue the Company's servants could have mustered names against the authority of which Macaulay's arguments might have beaten in vain; but on educational

policy Bentinck paid little heed to men whose names were unknown in London and who claimed to speak by reason of knowledge the value of which Macaulay and his supporters denied. The policy of Macaulay was therefore adopted by the Governor-General with scant consideration of the arguments urged against it.

This decision, however, was not entirely inspired by the theoretical arguments produced, and must be associated with the legislation passed by Parliament in 1833. The statute by which the Company's privileges were then again extended contained the famous provision (sec. 87 of the Charter Act) that in future no man was to be excluded from office in India by reason of race or religion. The section containing this declaration has usually been considered as intended immediately to open the higher offices to Indians. But that was certainly not the case. By an Act passed in 1793 the appointment to any civil office in the Company's territories carrying a salary of over £800 a year had been confined to covenanted servants of the East India Company. No Indian had ever been nominated to that service; and the Act of 1833 did nothing to modify the force of the former statute. No change was, in fact, intended in the recruitment to the higher posts, which were to continue to be filled with Englishmen. But, as the dispatch of the East India Company upon the Act of 1833 proves, it was desired that Indians should not find themselves excluded from employment in the subordinate posts which were open to everybody and which it was feared might be engrossed by men of mixed blood who were becoming numerous. The directors urged upon the Government the need of providing Indians with opportunities of education which would enable them to compete successfully against these possible rivals, and this consideration was certainly one which

Bentinck kept in mind. His successors, Auckland and Hardinge, carried the principle farther by declaring that European education should be taken as much as possible into account in selecting Indians for appointments under the Company.

The motives underlying the early educational policy of the Company's government thus consisted in the desire to promote the general culture of India by bringing it into touch with the knowledge and ideas of the West and in the hope of breeding a generation of Indians who would take more easily to English methods of administration than their predecessors had done. Similar ideas led Indians to co-operate eagerly with the Government in this matter. Western education was popular and keenly sought for in Calcutta and the chief towns of British India, especially among the class which had had most to do with the English, the men who had acted as their agents and chief assistants. These men were either Brahmins or members of the writer-castes of Bengal. Their traditions lay entirely in the direction of a literary education. Under the Muslims they had studied Persian. Many of the histories of the eighteenth century were written in Persian by Hindus of these castes, and they had occupied as prominent a position under the Moguls as they were to do under the British. Under the new régime a knowledge of English was most useful as a qualification for employment in the various offices of the Government; and even the students in the Sanskrit classes at least once petitioned the Government either to provide them with the means of living or to give them an English education which would enable them to feed themselves. Both with the Government and with the literary castes the foremost aim was, undoubtedly, practical—on the one side the desire of training efficient employees, on the other, the desire of securing employ-

ment. But there was another side as well. The success of European arms in India had turned attention to the peoples of the West; and, to an intellectual world which had for so long remained stereotyped, the new world of European thought was attractive in a high degree. Men, of whom Ram Mohan Roy was the most remarkable example, turned to the West with strong intellectual curiosity, and the fruits were immediate and marked. Ram Mohan Roy's attempts to introduce a reformed Church into Hinduism have already been mentioned. Perhaps it was natural that the first effects of European influence should be felt in the religious world; at all events it was the effect to which missionaries had looked with complete confidence. The introduction of Islam into India had in like manner been followed by heart-questioning and reform. But whereas Islam had brought to India a new religion only, Christianity came accompanied by a new knowledge and new principles of inquiry regarding the material world, which even the most conservative Hindu might study without sacrificing his faith. The influence of the new movement in India was therefore far more pervasive, for it threatened not only the ceremonial which forms the exoteric aspect of Hinduism but also the philosophy, or rather the systems of philosophy, which constitute its esoteric aspect.

In the region where these new influences enjoyed their chief strength, the immediate consequences were a violent reaction against Hinduism and all its works. In 1831 the Committee of Public Instruction had already noted at the Vidyalaya, as the Hindu College was first called, strong impatience of the trammels of Hinduism and a disregard of its ceremonies. Under the influence of a teacher named Derozio a debating club was formed called the Academic Association; and some of the senior students formed a

body which they called the Athenaeum, for the less restricted expression of their views. With the excess which frequently marks the new convert, they delighted in attacking Hinduism and its institutions, ascribing to its baneful influence the political misfortunes of the country. 'If there is anything', one of them wrote, 'which we hate from the bottom of our hearts, it is Hinduism.'

Attacks on the Hindu social system followed. Ram Mohan Roy himself had been among those who advised Bentinck against the immediate abolition of the practice of burning widows on their husbands' pyres. But that was not because he was in any way in favour of the custom. He rather feared that the great popularity which it enjoyed in Calcutta and its neighbourhood might lead to general disturbances. But the students' societies of this period seem to have actively advocated social reforms of the widest possible nature. A club for instance called the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge discussed the need of reform, civil and social, among all educated Indians, and the urgency of improving the condition of Hindu women. At about the same time the Indian press began to emerge, encouraged by the example of the Serampur missionaries. One of these early periodicals was distinguished by being the first to advocate the remarriage of widows, a thing most rigidly forbidden by Hindu custom.

Such were the first-fruits of Macaulay's educational policy. It created a group sharply separated from their fellow Indians not only by their views but also by the much deeper divisions of the caste system. These men would not, and indeed could not, hand on their knowledge and ideas to the rest of the population. For one thing they were too few in number. They might vent their revolutionary ideas in Calcutta in the familiar atmosphere of

their clubs and debating societies; but such talk met with small favour in the home circle, dominated by women knowing nothing of the West and caring nothing for western knowledge save in so far as it might provide a son or brother or husband with employment. In rural India their notions were still more alien. Moreover, the men who attended the colleges and schools of Calcutta were limited to the castes enjoying a traditional monopoly of literary knowledge. In Hindu eyes learning was the duty of the Brahmin but not of other men, who neither envied the Brahmin's monopoly nor sought to break it. The filtration theory of educational policy thus broke down in the face of the Indian social system; and failed altogether to produce the general consequences expected from it by its early advocates.

In 1854 a serious attempt was made to amend these defects of the educational system. It was organized; more attention was paid to the development of elementary education; attempts were made to promote vernacular studies. The plan of assisting schools founded by missionary societies or private persons by giving them grants-in-aid from public funds was introduced. But the original defects still persisted, because the agricultural classes of India had no use for education; the higher castes alone sought it, and that in the highest form in which it could be imparted. The consequence was the disproportionate development which still characterizes education in India with its excess of aspirants for university courses and its feeble development of elementary education. Thus, far from diffusing English ideas through the country, education brought into existence a small urban class, drawn from the higher castes alone, and consisting exclusively of men; for the Hindu custom of child-marriage remained until recent times an insuperable obstacle to the spread of

female education. This fact doubtless explains why the movement in favour of social reform which has already been noted among the first generation of English-educated Indians could make but small progress. English ideas might dominate the schools and colleges, the press, and public life, but laid no hold on the children to whom the young men were married by the arrangement of their parents. The mothers of each generation remained wedded to the old ideas. A man, however convinced of the impropriety of child-marriage or of widow-celibacy, found the greatest difficulties in carrying his theories into practice owing to the insistence of his womenfolk on the traditional standards of propriety. Such intimate opposition did not offer itself to ideas of political change. So it came to pass that, whereas the reforms advocated in the 'thirties and 'forties of the nineteenth century had been religious or social, they tended to be replaced by political reforms as the objects for which the educated class came to contend. This process was certainly aided by the state of European thought at the time. Such subjects as economic history and sociology attracted scant attention; but political institutions were being eagerly discussed. It was natural and indeed inevitable that Indian students should be greatly interested by this new world of thought which their academic studies opened to them. Such writings as Paine's, and speeches such as those of the Philosophic Radicals, were read as suggesting that all the political and social evils from which India was visibly suffering might be amended by the introduction of representative institutions. A little later the writings of John Stuart Mill and Mazzini in their different ways contributed to the same end; while the study of English history afforded a striking example of the manner in which political institutions might be transformed.

Even the earliest generation of Indian students had displayed marked political leanings. In 1832, when Ram Mohan Roy had been on a visit to England, he had taken a warm interest in the struggle over the Reform Bill, and had declared that if the Bill were defeated he would 'renounce his connexion with this country'. In England itself a small group of men appeared, known in the political slang of the day as 'Young India'. It established the British India Society, intended 'to fix the eyes of the entire nation on the extent . . . and the claims of British India'. The radicalism of those days was essentially individualist; and the chief reform which the society demanded was the transformation of the revenue system, which, it was said, made the Government the universal landlord. In 1842 George Thompson, who had been one of the leaders in this movement, visited Calcutta, and gave a number of lectures there. Mainly in consequence of this visit, the Bengal Indian Society was founded in the next year. A little later another body called the Bengal Landholders' Society was established. This body consisted mainly of wealthy Calcutta landowners, who, in 1851, amalgamated with the Bengal Indian Society under the new name of the British Indian Association. This was the first Indian society to undertake political activities. It sought mainly to protect the interests of the land-holding class, considered to be threatened by the proposals designed to ameliorate the position of the peasants, many of whom were entitled to tenancy rights which the landlords had been busily whittling away. In fact the alliance between the Radicals and the growing class of English-educated Indians was in many ways an alliance between men of different generations.

In 1853, when the Company's privileges had again to be extended by Parliament, the Radicals set up a new

body, the Indian Reform Society, with John Bright as chairman. The reform which Bright regarded as having a prior claim to all others was the abolition of the plan of seeking to govern British India from a single centre and the establishment of a number of mutually independent governments, each with authority over less unmanageable areas than the sub-continent of India. From the point of view of the political reformers he was right; for the introduction of political reforms into comparatively small units would have been an easier matter than their establishment in India as a whole, although it would obviously have retarded the development of nationalist sentiment. But in 1853, and again in 1858 when the government of the Company was replaced by that of the Crown, the Radicals exercised too little influence materially to affect the provisions of the Acts by which the administrative system was amended. In 1861, however, when the mode of legislation was modified in both the centre and the provinces, arrangements were at last made by which the Governor-General of India and the Governors of the presidencies could nominate Indian gentlemen to serve on the legislative councils, and thus take a definite part in the framing of the law of the country. At about the same time another Act opened to Indian judges the benches of the High Courts.

It seems likely that the reluctance of the British Parliament to admit further claims on the part of the educated class to share in the administration of the country was in no small measure due to the occurrence of the Indian Mutiny. Wherever during that catastrophe British authority vanished, old customs, such as the burning of widows, or the slaying of witches, at once revived. It thus became difficult to suppose that the influence of British education had been so deep as Macaulay had hoped. On

the contrary, many adopted the view that the effects of education must be regarded as a veneer rather than as a far-reaching alteration of character and ideas. The belief was doubtless confirmed by the tone which the Indian press came to adopt in the period following after the Mutiny. Down to the time of Bentinck the press in India had been subject to a close censorship. But Metcalfe, a Company's servant who had acted as Governor-General in the interval between Bentinck's resignation and Auckland's appointment, had released the press from all control save that of the ordinary law of libel and sedition. The wisdom of this action was very doubtful. Sir Thomas Munro, probably the wisest of all the Company's servants except Warren Hastings, urged, but urged in vain, that a free press and an autocratic government were incompatible. 'What is the first duty of a free press? It is to deliver the country from a foreign yoke.' It would act, he foretold, through the sepoy army. But his reasoning was forgotten. Accordingly the Indian press grew up under virtually no restrictions. The first Bengali periodical seems to have been printed in 1816. It was soon followed by a monthly issued by the Serampur missionaries. Such papers speedily multiplied, though none attained any great degree of vitality. In 1853 the *Hindu Patriot* appeared. This paper was decidedly political in tone, attacking Dalhousie's annexations, supporting Canning, and arguing that the Mutiny had been brought about by the conduct of a few hot-headed men. During the Mutiny, Canning found the periodicals then current too violent to be allowed to continue unchecked. He imposed a censorship, which, however, was suffered to lapse when the Mutiny had been suppressed. During the following period the tone of the Indian newspapers became much more aggressive. A Bengali journal, the *Som Prakash*, was

specially prominent. The officers employed by the courts of law, members of the police, and magistrates were constantly being attacked. On the outbreak of the Second Afghan War, in 1878, the Governor-General, Lytton, was much annoyed by the freedom of the comments made upon the policy of the Government; some journalists suggested the assassination of British officers, and proposed measures with the object of overthrowing government. The Vernacular Press Act was therefore passed. This law empowered magistrates to require the editors of papers in oriental languages either to submit the proofs for censorship or to give a bond to print nothing calculated to bring the Government into discredit or to excite hatred between men of different races. But this restriction did not last long. It was repealed in 1882 by Lytton's successor, Ripon.

The policy towards the press, like the educational policy, evidently favoured over-hasty development. The latter created a class of men, versed in European political theories, but born, bred, and living amid conditions quite unlike those with which European politicians were familiar; the former permitted this class to propagate their ideas with the utmost liberty, although no one, English or Indian, considered that the time had come for that class to attempt to administer unaided the Indian territories. The net effect was to widen the great gap existing between the urban and the rural population of the country. An urban class had been brought into existence claiming entire political liberty; essentially sectional in character, it was inspired by nationalist sentiment; and democratic as it was in political theory, it was compelled by political circumstances to make demands which if conceded would establish an oligarchy of a narrow class.

While matters were in this position, a strong impulsion

to further development was given by an episode little connected with the course of events which has just been sketched. Since 1854, when the recruitment of the Indian Civil Service became a matter of competitive examination, Indians had been legally eligible as candidates. For some years, however, this fact was of little greater advantage to them than the liberty formerly enjoyed by the Court of Directors of appointing them to the Company's covenanted service. The courses of study in Indian colleges had rendered effective Indian competition virtually impossible, while caste prejudices had hindered Indians from pursuing their studies in England. From about 1870, successful Indian candidates began to appear. They were mostly appointed to the judicial branch of the service, and in 1883 some of these men had reached a degree of seniority which would shortly permit their appointment to the rank of district and sessions judges. But, by the law in force at that time, no Indian-born judge or magistrate except within the presidency towns could hear accusations brought against European residents. The law had therefore to be amended or Indian-born district judges would exercise less power than European members of the same service. A Bill was accordingly introduced into the Governor-General's Council to abolish 'every judicial disqualification based merely on race distinctions'. This proposal was known as the Ilbert Bill, after the Law Member who had drafted it. It provoked strong opposition among the indigo-planters and tea-planters, who feared that it would expose them to unfair decisions, and their cause was loudly taken up by the European residents of Calcutta. This agitation was successful in bringing about a modification of the Bill. But at the same time it aroused an unexpected counter-agitation among the educated Indians, who resented the attacks of the Europeans

as casting an undeserved slur upon their judicial probity. Furthermore, the success of the Europeans in getting the Bill modified was a lesson not to be disregarded; and there can be no doubt that it gave an impetus to the aspirations of the politically-minded Indians. There was also the known eagerness of the Governor-General, Lord Ripon, to introduce new constitutional elements into the administration of India.

Chapter III

THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS IN ITS VARIOUS PHASES

DOMINANCE OF THE CENTRE PARTY, 1885–1904; RISE OF THE LEFT, 1904–1916; DOMINANCE OF THE LEFT, 1916–1932

By L. F. RUSHBROOK WILLIAMS, C.B.E.

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THE history of the Indian National Congress, from its foundation in 1885 to its proscription as an illegal organization in 1932, illustrates in remarkable degree the nature of the three principal streams whose waters jointly constitute the broad and swiftly flowing river of Indian nationalism. The first of these streams is a striving to attain for India a unity, even though it be a unity in diversity, which is to be expressed in definite political institutions. The second is a desire, originally inspired no doubt by contacts with western thought, to realize the ideals of freedom and self-government. The third, in contrast with the second, is a determination, based upon an assertion of the superiority of things Indian over things foreign, to safeguard the cultural heritage of India from the inroads of the dynamic civilizations of the West.

From the standpoint of Congress history, while the importance of the first of these streams, namely, the striving

after Indian unity, has remained constant, the importance of each of the other two has for many years varied inversely with that of its rival. During the last decade, however, a synthesis has been achieved by the growth of a new national spirit among the younger generation of the educated classes; a spirit which, if more self-conscious and therefore more aggressive than its predecessor, is nevertheless based upon foundations in which the cultures of the West and the cultures of India are recognized as complementary rather than antithetical. The manifestations of this new nationalism which, during the last three years, has found its most complete expression in the speeches and resolutions of the Congress, have not always been either prudent or constructive; but it must be remembered that patient endurance of the ordered processes of political evolution, though a cardinal virtue in the eyes of those responsible for bridging the gulf of anarchy which ever underlies the transition between different régimes, is rarely compatible with the striving towards domestic control over domestic affairs, upon which any spirit of nationalism, if it is to be creative and permanent, must depend.

It will be the purpose of the following pages to trace, necessarily in outline, the manner in which the Congress has given periodical expression to the varying, if convergent, ideas which constitute the inspiration of Indian nationalism. And in this connexion it is to be remembered that the divisions which have on occasion appeared within the ranks of the Congressmen relate for the most part rather to differences in method than to divergencies of aim. Such manifestations as the present cleavage between those who claim Dominion status for India, and those who demand 'complete independence', are characteristic of Congress history; but they are founded more upon the exigency of differing temperaments than upon any con-

flict of ideals. There is one section of opinion which sees no reason to suppose that the new Indian nationalism will discover anything inconsistent with its own operation in the continuance of India's connexion with the British Commonwealth. There is another section psychologically so constituted that it will scarcely be convinced of this until it has had the opportunity of experimenting for itself; and in order that the opportunity may not be lacking, continues in the meantime to voice its demand for 'complete independence' in successive sessions of the Congress. The fundamental identity of aim, underlying an obvious difference in method, is probably responsible for the fact that Indian party-nomenclature has changed, sometimes in accordance with momentary exigencies, in bewildering fashion. The historian is puzzled to distinguish between Moderates, Liberals, Responsivists, Independents, Nationalists, Co-operators on the one hand; and Extremists, Home-Rulers, Swarajists, Independence-ites, Non-Co-operators, on the other. But throughout the whole history of the Congress there may be discerned, beneath the party labels of the moment, the exponents of two separate and distinct schools of thought, divided in their methods, though not in their aims, in accordance with that temperamental distinction which makes every man at heart either a Conservative or a Liberal. The one school, which on the analogy of European groupings we may call for convenience the centre, has sought the common goal of a self-governing and a self-determining India through the process of moulding existing institutions into the desired shape by continued political pressure: now opposing, now co-operating with, the right-wing Government and its supporters, as circumstances dictate. Its philosophy has been that of British radicalism: its chosen methods those of a parliamentary opposition. The other, which we may term

the left wing, has sought the common goal by the process of weakening existing institutions in the hope that new ones will replace them. Its political philosophy, always allowing for the highly characteristic but erratically-operative element of non-violence, has been that of Sinn Fein, not unmixed with socialism of the Russian type. It has displayed a marked leaning towards 'direct' and non-parliamentary action. From time to time the two schools have sunk their differences; but since these differences are in essence both philosophical and temperamental, they have always re-emerged before long. To both schools of thought the new Indian nationalism owes much; and it is to the course of world-tendencies during the last half-century, rather than to any difference in intrinsic value between the two methods, that we must look for an explanation of the facts that the Congress, a weapon forged by the centre, has been wielded more and more by the left: and that its history, though mainly penned by the moderates, has for the most part been made by the extremists.

Dominance of the Centre, 1885–1904

The late Sir Surendranath Banerjea, throughout his long career a centre man deriving his inspirations from the political philosophy of the British Liberal party, has described the atmosphere in which the Indian National Congress came into being. His estimate[1] is of great value, for he was intimately associated with the Congress from its foundation until its final capture by the left: and both as platform orator, newspaper editor, and political organizer, was largely responsible for his party's particular contribution to the growth of Indian nationalism.

'In the sixties of the last century, and even earlier, the efforts of our national leaders were directed to securing for the people of India

[1] S. N. Banerjea, *A Nation in the Making* (1925), pp. 66–7.

an adequate share of the higher offices of trust and responsibility under the Government. The Queen's Proclamation of 1858 had stirred their ambitions in this direction, and in season and out of season they pressed for the redemption of the pledges contained in that message. In Western India, the movement was led by Mr. Nowroji Furdoonji and Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, India's Grand Old Man. In Bengal, the movement was represented by the British Indian Association and found ardent advocates in men like Kristo Das Pal, Rajendra Lal Mitter, Romanath Tagore, Degumbar Mitter, and others. But the ground was now to be shifted. . . . The efforts of the last few years had stirred a strange and hitherto-unfelt awakening among our people and had created new hopes and aspirations. It was not enough that we should have our full share of the higher offices; but we aspired to have a voice in the councils of the nation. There was the bureaucracy. For good or evil, it was there. We not only wanted to be members of the bureaucracy and to leaven it with the Indian element, but we looked forward to controlling it, and shaping and guiding its measures, and eventually bringing the entire administration under complete popular domination. . . . Along with the development of the struggle for place and power to be secured to our countrymen, there came gradually but steadily to the forefront the idea that this was not enough, that it was part, but not even the most vital part, of the programme for the political elevation of our people. The demand for representative government was now definitely formulated, and it was but the natural and legitimate product of the public activities that had preceded it.'

Like many other institutions which arise to meet a need experienced by different people for divers reasons, the Congress was the product of circumstances rather than the creation of individuals. Its roots are to be discovered in separate associations in various parts of India: it was watered by the controversies over the Vernacular Press Act, the Arms Act, the reduction of the age-limit for entrance into the Indian Civil Service, and the Ilbert Bill. Neither Indians nor Englishmen can claim to be its sole creators. If it was A. O. Hume of the Bengal Civil Service (1829–1912) who fathered the idea of an All-India organization which should work for the social regeneration of

India as a means for political advancement, and who, by his public letter to the graduates of Calcutta University, fired the educated classes in Bengal to take the lead in his movement;[1] and if it was Lord Dufferin who persuaded Hume to give this organization from the first the character of a political organization, it was such men as Surendranath Banerjea whose writings and speeches had awakened political interest among the educated classes outside the presidency towns; and such men as Dadabhai Naoroji who in Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras pointed the way by which, as they hoped, the nascent ambitions of the Indian intellectuals could march to ultimate fulfilment. Indeed, the number, even at this date, of workers in the vineyard was probably responsible for the delay which ensued before the Indian National Congress could realize its aim of 'enabling all the most earnest labourers in the cause of national progress to become personally known to each other'.[2] For while the Indian National Congress was holding its first meeting at Bombay in December 1885, an Indian National Conference, more largely attended, was concluding its second annual session at Calcutta.[3] But in the course of the following months the leaders of the Conference joined the Congress, whose programme of political work for the year was conceived upon lines calculated to make a wide appeal; and the distinctive character of the Congress was from this time assured.

A study of the resolutions passed, and of the speeches made, in the early sessions of the Congress serves to reveal the dominance of what we may term, in anticipation of subsequent developments, the typical centre-party programme. The aim was so to remodel the structure of the

[1] Sir William Wedderburn, *A. O. Hume* (1913), p. 50.

[2] *Report and Proceedings of the First Indian National Congress.*

[3] Banerjea, p. 99.

existing Indian administration as to bring it into harmony with the western ideal of a parliamentary system. This ideal, stated by W. C. Bonnerjee in the first presidential address to be 'in no way incompatible with their thorough loyalty to the British Government', was based by its advocates upon the fact that the people of India were British citizens, and, as such, entitled to the benefit of British institutions, legislative, executive, and judicial. Thus the severe, if meticulous, criticism directed from year to year against the structure and the policy of the Indian administration indicated no hostility to the Indo-British connexion, which was continually extolled as the means whereby the beacon-light of western ideals had been brought within the vision of a politically backward India. Indeed it was an article of faith with the earlier generation of Congressmen that the realization of their ambitions depended in large measure upon their ability to convince the Parliament and people of Britain (*ex hypothesi* liberally minded but ignorant) of the justice of their claims. This doctrine appears at first sight incompatible with the tenor of Hume's 1883 letter to the graduates of Calcutta University, wherein he argued that India's political salvation lay in Indian hands. But to the Congressmen of that era there was no contradiction. Political freedom would assuredly come as a gift from the British people, freely and gladly bestowed when Indians by their own efforts had convinced Parliament that they deserved it. Both Hume and Wedderburn encouraged this view; the latter in particular devoting himself to parliamentary work on behalf of the Congress in England. From 1889 onwards, until Wedderburn's death, in 1918, each succeeding Congress conveyed by resolution its 'thanks to the British Committee'—sometimes, though by no means always, accompanied by a small monetary grant, pitiably insufficient to discharge the costs

of the work which Wedderburn and his friends undertook.[1] Such an attitude of mind made easy the adhesion to the Congress ranks not only of Hindus, Parsis, and Muslims (despite the opposition of the veteran Sir Syed Ahmad)[2] but also of British merchants, lawyers, and politicians—in short, of every one interested in politics who did not happen to hold an official position in the administration. The first twenty meetings of the Congress witnessed the election of no fewer than four Britons to the presidential chair; and some of the bluntest criticism of the Government of India proceeded not from Indians, but from Englishmen. Indeed, the Congress, which from 1886 onwards had constituted standing committees 'at all important centres',[3] soon became so active in propaganda both in India and in England, that the Government of India gradually withdrew their countenance, without, however, affecting the co-operation of Indians and Englishmen in Congress work.

The criticism of the Congress was the more formidable, in that it was both couched in constitutional form, and directed for the most part against institutions, practices, and policies based upon administrative convenience rather than upon more defensible principles. Thus the reiterated and closely reasoned demands for the expansion of the legislatures into representative institutions; for the extension of the jury system; for the appointment of Indians to the Privy Council; for the expansion of technical education; for simultaneous Indian Civil Service examinations in India and in England; for the modification of the Arms Act, the creation of Indian volunteer corps and the establishment of military colleges; for the removal of the

[1] Ratcliffe, *Sir William Wedderburn* (1923), p. 107.

[2] Banerjea, p. 108. See also Chap. V.

[3] *Proceedings of the 2nd Congress*, resolution 13.

salary of the Secretary of State for India from the Indian to the Home estimates,—were the more inconvenient at the time on account of the inherent justification which made subsequent concession inevitable. Nor did the Congress, even in these early years, confine its attention merely to the more domestic affairs of British India: it was at pains, by taking the widest view, to justify its claims to be considered 'the germ of a native Parliament'. At its tenth meeting (resolution 21) it recorded the first of a long series of strong protests against the disabilities of Indians abroad; in its twelfth meeting it attacked the system by which an Indian Prince can be deposed for maladministration without the fact of maladministration being established before any tribunal (resolution 18); in its thirteenth meeting it severely criticized frontier policy. In short, there was no branch of the administration's activities which escaped its notice; while upon the economic and budgetary policy of the Government of India its attacks were increasingly formidable.[1]

The line of activity for which the Congress stood, namely strictly constitutional pressure, exerted both in India and in England in the newspapers and from the platform, derived a measure of encouragement from the reforms of 1892, which, though falling far short of the demand of the educated classes, seemed by their countenance of the elective system to demonstrate the efficacy of the methods the Congress was pursuing. The eyes of the centre party, whose domination was still unchallenged, were as ever turned to the British public; and the efforts of Wedderburn, Dadabhai Naoroji, and other 'Members for India' at Westminster, though producing little positive result, were important in that they served to keep alive the hopes of the older generation.

[1] Ishwar Nath Topa, *The Growth and Development of National Thought in India* (Hamburg, 1930), chap. xi.

It is a matter for speculation whether, in more favourable circumstances than those characterizing the closing decade of the nineteenth century, the methods of the centre would have provoked any formidable opposition from men of a more impatient temperament. Led by such statesmen as Pherozeshah Mehta, Surendranath Banerjea, and G. K. Gokhale, and controlling the smoothly working machine of the Congress organization, the centre functioned almost without a rival in the field of Indian politics. But a reaction, the more formidable from its tardiness, against the enthusiasm for western culture which had so long dominated the educated classes in India, was slowly beginning to make itself felt. Swami Dayanand and Swami Vivekananda each in his different way had already asserted on the spiritual side the superiority of Vedic Hinduism over the systems of the western world; and before long, the same impulse to vindicate an awakening pride in India's heritage became manifest in the sphere of politics.

The formidable personality of B. G. Tilak was identified with this movement. A champion of orthodox Brahminism, a fierce opponent of western culture, he saw in the British administration a citadel to be sapped rather than a metropolis to be modernized. The foundation of his power lay in his revival of the Maratha politico-religious tradition; but his fiery gospel of self-reliance made an appeal to the younger generation of educated Indians which was all the stronger for its contrast with what they began, if cautiously at first, to denounce as the 'mendicancy' of the Congress method. His success in the Deccan was followed by the spread of his doctrine to Bengal, where B. C. Pal and Arabindo Ghose directed the enthusiasm of the immature into channels which, as later experience showed, were destined to lose their way in a morass of

despair and tragedy. Nor was Tilak's appeal to the educated alone: he utilized his great gifts of leadership to fashion a political weapon out of the social and religious prejudices of the illiterate. He extolled the merits of 'direct action'; he despised the parliamentary methods of agitation which had hitherto characterized the Congress. In short, he was the real founder of the left-wing party in India. The weakness of his original policy, as distinguished from the merits or defects of the methods which he advocated, lay in its uncompromisingly Hindu ideology. His instincts were anti-Muslim as well as anti-Western; and just in so far as his ideas gained ground, the Indian national movement and the institutions with which this movement was connected began to lose their original catholicity, and though able to command the services of individual Muslims of advanced views, gradually forfeited the support of the Muslim community in general.

The distressing famines of 1896 and 1897, the plague-riots, the first 'political murders' in 1897, the early deportations and other administrative measures against militant unrest, combined to produce an atmosphere unfavourable to the centre-party methods of the Congress. But the foundations of that institution had been truly laid: it was fortunate in possessing a group of brilliantly able leaders; and so long as Gokhale and Pherozeshah Mehta lived, Tilak, despite his most desperate efforts, never succeeded in capturing it effectively. In 1899, in the face of left-wing feeling, the Congress affirmed that its object was 'to promote by constitutional means the interests and well-being of the people of the Indian Empire' (resolution 10). At the same time it strengthened its organization by appointing an All-India Congress committee, representative of the provincial Congress committees, to carry on its affairs between the plenary sessions. This institution was at a

later date supplemented by 'standing' and 'working' committees of more manageable size and composition.

The political currents which had so swiftly borne Tilak into prominence did not leave the Congress itself unaffected. While standing fast to their faith in constitutional methods of procedure, the centre party's pronouncements assumed a sterner tone. The establishment of parliamentary institutions in India no longer appeared to them as a privilege to be earned; it assumed the aspect of a right to be vindicated. So essentially moderate a leader as Gokhale, in his evidence before the Royal Commission in 1897, clearly struck the new note:

> 'The excessive costliness of the foreign agency [i.e. the British administration] is not, however, its only evil. There is a moral evil which, if anything, is even greater. A kind of dwarfing or stunting of the Indian race is going on under the present system. We must live all the days of our life in an atmosphere of inferiority and the tallest of us must bend in order that the exigencies of the existing system may be satisfied. . . . The moral elevation which every self-governing people feels cannot be felt by us. Our administrative and military talents must gradually disappear owing to sheer disuse, till at last our lot, as hewers of wood and drawers of water in our own country, is stereotyped.' [1]

The discontent which at the beginning of the present century characterized the educated classes was increased by the policy of Lord Curzon, who pursued with single-minded zeal the enhancement of administrative efficiency. In his view, efficiency was largely synonymous with centralization, and with the untrammelled operation of measures designed to promote the good of the country as a whole through the smoother working of the executive over which he presided so brilliantly. Quite apart, therefore, from his dislike of political change, there was a fundamental antagonism between his ideals and the ideals

[1] Quoted by Ishwar Nath Topa, p. 143.

of the educated classes, who desired to control the executive through parliamentary institutions and to restrict, not to increase, its discretionary sphere. Further, Lord Curzon, who cherished with unquestioning tenacity, almost as an article of faith, a conviction of the superiority of Englishmen over Indians, refused to recognize the small if growing English-speaking intelligentsia as representing any class save itself; and could discern in the whole national movement little save the personal ambitions of a handful of men striving for place and power. As he made no secret of his opinions, the breach between the Government and the Congress steadily widened. And the more fervidly he pursued the good of India as he saw it, the more formidable were the forces, potential and actual, that he drove into opposition. His remodelling of the Calcutta Corporation, his University policy, and, above all, his partition of Bengal, served to galvanize the educated classes throughout India into an activity which constituted a landmark in the growth of the Indian national movement.

Throughout these difficult times the Congress continued upon the road which its founders had marked out for it. Hume continued year after year as its General Secretary, with one or more Indians of the stamp of D. E. Wacha and G. K. Gokhale as his colleagues. In 1904 the twentieth meeting was presided over by an Englishman—Sir Henry Cotton, just retired from the Indian Civil Service—and with him from England came Wedderburn. Cotton notes: 'Bal Gangadhar Tilak was there, and he had his following, but there was no division then of the community into extremists and moderates.'[1] The resolutions included reiterations of the Congress demand for administrative change and political advancement, coupled with energetic protests against the 'forward policy' on the frontier and the

[1] Cotton, *Indian and Home Memories* (1911), p. 288.

projected partition of Bengal. The continued predominance of centre-party ideas was demonstrated both by a decision to send a deputation, consisting of G. K. Gokhale and Lajpat Rai, to represent the Congress in England; and by the demand that each province of India should be entitled to return at least two members to the House of Commons.

Rise of the Left, 1904–1916

'The Congress of 1904', writes Mr. Ratcliffe, 'was the culminating point of the movement as directed by the founders, and by those younger leaders who shared their political faith and were content with their methods. Thereafter, new and disturbing forces made themselves felt.'[1] In July 1905 the partition of Bengal was announced, and a storm of bitter resentment, rising in that province, swept over the educated classes throughout India. From the moment when the project had been suggested, strong and persistent opposition had been voiced: and its translation into fact, in face of this opposition, appeared to the politically conscious not only as a deliberate affront, but as a Machiavellian attempt to weaken the whole national movement by rending asunder the province which had begun to assume its leadership. Accordingly, a widespread agitation, which in its sheer intensity constituted a new phenomenon in Indian politics, was set on foot for the reversal of the partition. This agitation was expressly directed, in accordance with the traditional ideas of the centre party, towards arousing the British public to an appreciation of Indian grievances: but the time-honoured method of expounding the case of the educated classes in the press, from the platform, and in the British Parliament, was reinforced by a wholly novel technique which, if it did not derive its origin from the ideas of the

[1] Ratcliffe, pp. 138-9.

left wing, was doubtless a product of the political atmosphere in which their strength was growing. This technique took the form of a boycott of British goods, naturally supplemented by the encouragement of swadeshi (lit., of one's own country) manufactures. It depended for its success upon the mobilization of the student community and of the younger generation of the politically minded classes, by fervent appeals to patriotism, self-respect, and self-sacrifice. Its originators, in perfect good faith, denied that it was anti-British;[1] and were at pains to demonstrate its 'constitutional' character by arguing that its intention was merely to awaken public opinion in England to the seriousness of the Indian situation. But in so far as the class-and-mass movements to which it gave rise led to clashes with the administration, to an ever-increasing bitterness in the minds of impressionable youths, and to the growth of a hatred of things foreign, it represented a definite departure from centre-party ideas and a swing towards the methods of the left wing. The result of the adoption of the new technique by the centre party was the introduction of an unbalanced and explosive element into the Indian national movement which has persisted ever since, and against which the centre party itself has from time to time vainly protested. Further, the conduct of the anti-partition campaign, which was Hindu in inspiration, finally completed the alienation of the Muslim community from the activities of the Congress. The creation of the new province of Eastern Bengal was gratifying to Muslim sentiment; and in 1906 the Muslim League was founded to obviate the risk that the interests of Muslims should be overlooked amidst the turmoil of Hindu agitation.

The proceedings of the Benares meeting of the Congress in 1905 are eloquent of the prevalence of a new spirit of

[1] Banerjea, p. 191.

bitterness. The administration was indicted by Gokhale himself for 'its utter contempt of public opinion, its arrogant pretensions to superior wisdom, its reckless disregard of the most cherished feelings of the people, the mockery of an appeal to its sense of justice, its cool preference of service interests to those of the governed'.[1] While the British connexion still appeared a blessing, British rule was now regarded as a curse. The only remedy, it was said, lay in self-government. 'The goal of the Congress', declared Gokhale, 'is that India should be governed in the interests of the Indians themselves, and that in course of time a form of government should be attained in this country similar to what exists in the self-governing colonies of the British Empire.'[2] The constitutional character of the boycott movement was affirmed by resolution: and the measures taken by the administration to suppress it were condemned. For the rest, the resolutions followed traditional lines; and despite the fear lest the left wing, now strongly represented, should succeed in committing the Congress to 'wild and impossible positions',[3] the centre party retained its old control of the procedure. Nevertheless, there had been a change in tone; and the keynote of the meeting was struck by Lajpat Rai in his declaration: 'We are perfectly justified in trying to become arbiters of our own destiny and in trying to obtain freedom.'[4]

During the next two years the left wing, stimulated by the prevailing tension between the educated classes and the administration, and inspired by the epoch-making victory of Asiatic Japan over European Russia, steadily gained ground. But the centre party, however bitterly it might criticize the administration, held firmly to the ideal

[1] *Report of the 21st Indian National Congress*, p. 8. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 13.
[3] Mody, *Sir Pherozeshah Mehta*, vol. ii, p. 522.
[4] *Report of the 21st Indian National Congress*, p. 73.

of remodelling it by constitutional means and thus securing its control. The leaders of the party looked upon the boycott movement and its connected activities as only justified by ephemeral, and indeed local, conditions; as a distasteful temporary expedient, the adoption of which had been forced upon them by the exigencies of the moment; as something which they would gladly discontinue when the need for it had passed;[1] not as a normal method of constitutional agitation. To the adherents of the left wing, on the other hand, the boycott, the volunteer movement, and mob-violence stood for a consciously chosen technique; and any imputation from the centre party against its legitimacy provoked them to fury. At the Calcutta meeting of 1906, the centre and the left wings wrangled fiercely over the propriety of the boycott as a political weapon of universal application; B. C. Pal and Khaparde headed a contingent of younger men who insulted the veterans;[2] and a split was only avoided by the efforts of Dadabhai Naoroji, now more than eighty years of age, who had journeyed from England in an endeavour to hold the national movement together. The upshot was that the centre party, though embarrassed by the declaration of John Morley, then Secretary of State for India, that the partition must be accepted as a 'settled fact', still remained in control; but the tenor of the resolutions dealing with self-government on colonial lines, with national education, with the swadeshi and boycott movements, and the temper of the speeches delivered in support of them, revealed the extent to which the Congress was influenced by left-wing ideas. Even men of the old school spoke of a 'trial of strength between the people and the bureaucracy', and summarized the immediate political issue as they saw it in the following words: 'Is India to be governed

[1] Banerjea, p. 192. [2] Mody, p. 524.

autocratically without any regard to the sentiments and opinions of the people, who must be made to know their proper place as an inferior subject race, or on those enlightened principles which are professed by our rulers?'[1] Tilak was delighted, and regarded the proceedings as the first step towards shaking the Congress 'out of its torpid tortoise-like gait and turning it into a living and active body'. He looked forward with some confidence to capturing its organization for the left.

The centre party were themselves apprehensive, and changed the venue of the 1907 meeting from Nagpur, where the left wing had been active, to Surat. The followers of Tilak, frustrated in their efforts to secure the election of a left-wing president, fomented the rumour that the Calcutta resolutions were to be cancelled, and, aided by the resulting excitement, rushed the platform amid scenes of wild disorder. The meeting broke up in confusion. Apparently the Tilakites had hoped to overawe their opponents, and thus to capture the Congress machine. But the centre party was still powerful, not only in the ability of its leaders, but also in the support of the provincial Congress committees. Its members summoned a convention, consisting of delegates who had signed a declaration in favour of the attainment, by strictly constitutional means, of self-government within the Empire on Dominion lines: they appointed a committee to draft a constitution for the Congress based upon this creed; and in the event, it was the left wing who were driven into the wilderness. Realizing too late the result of their tactics, the Tilakites made various overtures to the centre party; but the latter adhered firmly to the condition that membership of the Congress entailed subscription to the Congress creed. The left wing remained outside the Congress until 1916.

[1] Ishwar Nath Topa, p. 150.

During the years which followed the Surat meeting of 1907 the centre party gained steadily in prestige at the expense of the left wing, which suffered in reputation from its connexion with the anarchical movement in Bengal, and lost certain of its leaders from imprisonment and deportation. Nevertheless, its time was coming. It was securing more recruits among the younger men, particularly in Bengal, who were impatient of caution and zealous to redeem themselves from the stigma of inferiority under which, as they were persuaded, they laboured. Self-sacrifice which was to earn the freedom of India from the domination of alien governors and alien ideals, when invested with a spiritual significance, exerted a marked attraction upon impressionable Hindu youths, to whom the programme of the centre appeared as 'mendicancy'. And indeed the centre party itself, though it adhered steadily to its aim of realizing self-government within the Empire by constitutional means, did not advocate British ideas and British institutions with the old uncritical fervour Its claims were no longer based upon the fact of British citizenship, but upon an assertion of the inherent rights of the Indian people. Unfortunately for itself, it relied for its strength rather upon its well-tried leaders than upon its power of attracting new recruits. Had it not been for the support of Morley and the Liberal Government in Britain, it would scarcely have been able to retain its hold upon the Congress. But the first Indian appointments to the Council of India and to the Viceroy's Executive Council, the Minto-Morley reforms of 1909, and the revocation in 1911 of the partition of Bengal were hailed, not without reason, as a vindication of the methods of constitutional agitation to which the centre party was committed. Leaders of the stamp of Wedderburn saw in these events the triumph of the ideals which the Congress was founded

to promote. There had been born in India, Wedderburn said when he presided over the Congress of 1910, a new spirit of self-reliance; but this must not be allowed to degenerate into racial hostility. 'Hand in hand with the British people India can most safely take her first steps on the new path of progress.'[1]

Nor was the spectacle of the centre party's success without effect upon the minds of the Muslim community. In the reforms of 1909 the Muslims had succeeded in securing the particular consideration which they claimed; but the growing impression that it was no longer expedient to dissociate themselves from the main stream of nationalist activity was reinforced by the attitude of their younger men. Accordingly, in 1913, the Muslim League formally adopted the Congress ideal of self-government for India within the Empire, and the bulk of educated Muslims became once more identified with the centre party.

Dominance of the Left, 1916–1932

When the Great War broke out in 1914 the centre party appeared firmly established in its control of the Congress machine. But within the next two years the situation completely changed. For this fact Mrs. Besant, who joined the Congress in 1914, was largely responsible. With the experienced eye of a western-trained political leader, she discerned the possibility of uniting the centre and left parties upon the common platform of a 'Home Rule League', which should capitalize for the cause of constitutional advance the gratitude aroused in British hearts by India's loyalty. In 1915 her plan was rejected by the centre party; but the enthusiasm of the left wing, the death of Gokhale and Pherozeshah Mehta, and the growing anxiety among the educated classes lest India, through

[1] Ratcliffe, p. 150.

the realization of the ideals of Imperial federation then so widely discussed, should be subordinated in some degree to the Dominions as well as to Britain, combined to make her triumph inevitable. At the 1916 meeting of the Congress, held at Lucknow, the left wing predominated, and her project was accepted. The Muslim League joined with Congress in supporting a campaign for Home Rule, based upon an agreed minimum of constitutional advance. The Government of India, distracted by the preoccupations of the War, and themselves busily engaged in discussing 'the next step' with the Home Government, were taken by surprise. Excitement steadily mounted until it attained a pitch which was regarded as dangerous; and in the summer of 1917 Mrs. Besant was interned. This step, which was directly responsible for her election as president of the Calcutta Congress of 1917, finally shattered the position of the adherents of the centre party, who lost ground steadily in the disturbed atmosphere of which the left wing took full advantage. The balance was not restored even by Mr. E. S. Montagu's notable declaration of 20 August 1917, which in other circumstances would have been hailed as a victory for the traditional policy and methods so long pursued by the centre party; and the left wing was confirmed in its control over the Congress machinery. The cleavage between the two parties was completed by the publication of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report in 1918; for the centre party pronounced this scheme a substantial instalment of responsible government to be welcomed and improved upon, while the left wing termed it disappointing and unsatisfactory. The centre party refused to participate in a special session of the Congress held in August 1918; and proceeded to set up Liberal Leagues in opposition to the Congress organization. When the ordinary session of the Congress took place

in Delhi, the party of the left were in undisputed control, and they pressed their views with characteristic confidence, self-assertion, and lack of compromise. India's right to immediate Home Rule was confidently proclaimed; ordinary dictates of prudence and expediency were brushed aside in the speeches delivered. Even Mrs. Besant and her supporters, so lately numbered with the vanguard of the left wing, found the pace too hot for them, and were shortly driven to form a 'National Home Rule League' of their own, professing views less radical than those which had found expression in the Congress. The Muslim League, which had also been captured by the less cautious elements in the community, displayed a similar spirit; and the entire left wing of the educated classes committed itself to condemnation of the scheme for the reformed constitution.

The tragic year 1919 was unquestionably favourable to the spread of left-wing ideas among the educated classes. Economic distress, Muslim anxiety over the Turkish peace terms, and fears lest the constitutional reforms might be delayed and 'whittled down', together produced an atmosphere surcharged with electricity, the tension of which reached sparking-point with the introduction by Government of the 'Rowlatt Bills' for suppressing anarchical outrages, as described in detail in later chapters. The strange, enigmatic figure of Mr. Gandhi put himself at the head of the Satyagraha (soul-force) movement of protest, which the left wing adopted as their own. The storm burst in a welter of blood and ruin; and the war with Afghanistan added to the troubles of the administration. The racial bitterness evoked by the Punjab disturbances added to the power of the left wing; and Mr. Gandhi, now established as a leader in Indian politics, endeavoured to unite Hindus and Muslims on the basis of the movement to protect Turkey. The Congress meeting of 1919,

again dominated by the left wing, condemned the reforms of that year; the Liberals held their own meetings and concentrated on preparation for the forthcoming elections. After some hesitation, the left wing, carried away by the excitement of the Khilafat agitation, decided to boycott the new legislatures, and in a special session of the Congress held in September 1920 pledged itself to Mr. Gandhi's scheme of non-co-operation. The Nagpur session at the end of 1920 set the seal upon the capture of the Congress by the left; for Mr. Gandhi succeeded in altering the old 'creed' in such fashion as to eliminate the declared adherence to the British connexion and to constitutional methods of agitation—thereby reversing the work of 1907.

The change in the aims of the Congress, and the institution of the reformed legislatures, central and provincial, as a focus of national activity in the political sphere, definitely bring to an end the history of the Congress as 'a native Parliament'. From this time forward it becomes a party machine of the left wing. Its elaborate organization persists; it continues to count its adherents in every town and in every district of British India; it remains a formidable instrument for the marshalling of opinion and the execution of policy. But it is sectional, not catholic; it comes, as the years pass, to represent a party rather than a people; and in composition it is predominantly Hindu. Even its appearance changes. Its meetings, swelled by large numbers of agriculturalists and town labourers, present the appearance of a mass demonstration rather than of a parliament; and the character of its proceedings reflect the change.

Since the aim of this chapter is to trace the history of the Congress as an institution, rather than to follow the fortunes of the left wing group in Indian politics, it will be unnecessary to describe in detail, between 1920 and

the present day, the vicissitudes of what is henceforth essentially a party machine. It will therefore suffice to indicate in summary form the general course of its progressive departure from the old principles.

The failure of Mr. Gandhi's non-co-operation movement to break the reformed constitution, the collapse of the Khilafat movement, leading to acute Hindu-Muslim dissensions, and the growing influence of the new legislatures, controlled by Liberals, produced a reaction in Congress ranks. In 1923 the left wing, under the leadership of Pandit Motilal Nehru and Mr. C. R. Das, declared for the policy of entering, instead of boycotting, the legislatures, whereon, at the next elections, they secured sufficient representation to enable them to embark upon a policy of organized obstruction. During the ensuing five years Mr. Gandhi remained in retirement; and the annual meetings of the Congress became the scene of disputes between those who were determined to wreck the legislatures from within, and those who were prepared to temper opposition with a measure of co-operation. But underlying these disputes a more fundamental cleavage gradually became manifest, namely, between those who desired to work for 'complete independence' and those who adhered to the goal of 'Dominion status'. In 1927 the resentment against the All-British composition of the Statutory Commission enabled the adherents of 'complete independence' to carry the day; but the division of opinion in Congress circles was so acute that Mr. Gandhi was brought out of his retirement in 1928 to arrange a compromise between those who had produced the Nehru report (which imported Dominion status but incidentally led to the widening of the breach between Hindus and Muslims) and the protagonists of independence. The compromise took the form of a time-limit, within which the authorities

were to grant Dominion status. Failing this, 'complete independence' was to form the goal of the Congress. The more extreme opinion soon carried the day. When it was found that the Round Table Conference announced in October 1929 was not to function as a constituent assembly to draw up a Dominion constitution for India, the Lahore Congress that year, under Mr. Gandhi's lead, decided to boycott the Conference and declare for complete independence. Mr. Gandhi started another civil-disobedience movement in connexion with the salt laws; and the Congress organization was directed to the task of 'bringing Government to its knees' by boycott and passive resistance. This aim was not achieved, and the success of the first sessions of the Round Table Conference in 1930–1 was a severe blow to Congress influence, which was already suffering from the general discomfort inflicted upon the community by the policy it was advocating. This influence was shortly rehabilitated by the 'pact' in March 1931 between Mr. Gandhi, now recognized as the dictator of the Congress, and Lord Irwin, the Viceroy.

Soon afterwards, the Karachi meeting of the Congress confirmed the 'pact', and authorized Mr. Gandhi, as Congress plenipotentiary, to attend the second session of the Round Table Conference in September 1931. In London Mr. Gandhi stoutly claimed that the Congress was representative of all India; but this claim carried its own refutation through its denial by other delegates. During his absence, however, the aggressive activities of the Congress, under the direction of leaders not recognizing his control, broke out once more; and the administration took stern action to restore the situation. Shortly after his return to India Mr. Gandhi was interned; executive action was taken for similar reasons against certain branches of the Congress organization; and in April 1932

the meeting fixed at Delhi was prohibited, and those who set forth to attend it were penalized.

In this melancholy impasse stands, at the moment of writing (October 1932), the impressive organization whose history we have briefly traced. Diverted from its original ends, tendering to party that which was due to the State, it may well seem to have belied the hopes of its founders. For, as recent years have shown, it has become sectional, not 'Indian'; partisan, not 'National'; a caucus, not a 'Congress'.

Chapter IV

THE MODERATES OF THE RIGHT AND CENTRE

By J. ARTHUR JONES, C.I.E.

[Mr. J. A. Jones was editor of *The Statesman*, published in Calcutta and one of the leading newspapers in India, from 1912 to 1924. During that period he was in close personal touch with all the important political movements that took place and with those who played a leading part in them. He was a member of the Bengal Legislative Council and of the Corporation of Calcutta.]

IN the previous chapter an account has been given of the first organized political body in India; and it has been shown that, while it started as a constitutional critic of the administration, it is now hostile to the existing Government as constituted by law, and demands complete independence. The present chapter is concerned with men who have on the whole refrained from extremism, who have been critical of various aspects of British rule, but who have no desire to break the connexion of India with the Empire.

First under this general designation may be mentioned the Muhammadans, the great majority of whom have usually been friendly to the Government except on occasions when the interests of their religion seemed to be threatened either by the action of the Government of India or by that of the British Government in England. They have in general held aloof from the National Congress, in accordance with the advice of their great leader, Sir Syed Ahmad; but there has always existed a small group of dissenters, commonly known as Congress Muslims, who have subordinated their communal attachments to All-India politics.

As a class, the zamindars or large landholders, because of their substantial interest in the maintenance of law and order, have been opposed to ambitious political changes and have been friendly to Government, except when the British authorities have deemed it necessary to impose taxation affecting land or to legislate for the protection of the cultivating peasantry. The lower classes among the Hindus have in general recognized the fairness of the British Government and its willingness to do justice to the oppressed. They have no sympathy with Hindu aspirations towards self-government, mainly because they do not understand them.

Among the moderates may also be classed the converted non-co-operators who abandoned the *swaraj* (Home Rule) policy of pure obstruction in the provincial legislatures. When the swarajists entered the Legislative Assembly in 1924, they did so with the avowed purpose of wrecking the reforms of 1919 by automatic hostility to Government measures. There were occasions, however, when a vote against a Government Bill would have antagonized important Indian interests. The early vigour of the swarajists gradually became irksome even to the purists, and the policy became inconsistent and illogical. Ultimately their leader, Pandit Motilal Nehru, himself consented to serve on the Indian Sandhurst Committee; and Mr. V. J. Patel, a swaraj stalwart, stood for election as president of the Assembly. In these circumstances, first the 'independents' led by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, and then the 'responsive co-operators', rejected the swarajist plan of action. The formal rupture took place in the Cawnpore Congress of 1925, when Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Mr. Jayakar, the leader of the 'responsive co-operators', strongly opposed a resolution pledging the swarajists to withdraw from the Legislative Assembly if by the close of

the next session the Government had not met the claims of the swarajists. The exodus of the swarajists was duly carried out, but the main effect of an unimpressive bit of ritual was to convince the leaders of the other parties that the time had come to join forces. At a conference held in Bombay in April 1926, responsivists, independents, and liberal moderates met to discuss the possibilities of union. The conference agreed to form a new nationalist party, but no permanent organization resulted from the decision.

The existence of these important moderate elements in the highly composite aggregate of the Indian political constituency needs to be stressed because by an accident of nomenclature the name of 'moderates' has become attached to the influential class of Hindu moderates who since 1918 have called themselves Liberals, possibly to distinguish themselves from the landholding moderates or to suggest an analogy with the Liberals among English political parties. It would be pleasant to think that the Government of India unwittingly played the part of godfather in bestowing upon the moderates their secondary name; for in 1890 the Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne, defining his attitude towards the Congress, wrote: 'The Government of India recognize that the Congress movement is regarded as representing what would in Europe be called the advanced Liberal party, as distinguished from the great body of Conservative opinion which exists side by side with it.' At that time, however, the designation 'Liberals' was merely prophetic. The Hindu moderates were still moderate in opinion, and took up their characteristic attitude from a recognition of the apparently permanent nature of British rule. Since the British Government could have no alternative, and however strongly its policy might be attacked, and Viceroys and members of council might be criticized, they could not be banished

from office or replaced by their critics, the reasonable course was not to bring into disrepute the only available administration. Hence Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee, who presided over the first National Congress, held in Bombay in 1885, by way of justifying the aims of that gathering, claimed that their desire to be governed according to the ideas of government which obtained in Europe was 'in no way incompatible with their thorough loyalty to the British Government'. All that they desired, he said, was that the basis of government should be widened and that the people should have their natural share therein.

In contrast with this moderate movement there existed another, inspired by a truculent nationalism, of which Mr. Tilak was the leader, and the agitation against the partition of Bengal, carried on by professed moderates, developed as one of its methods the boycott of Lancashire goods with picketing, from which evolved an extremist group and a revolutionary conspiracy rich in crime. One of the most prominent organizers of the campaign against the partition, Sir Surendranath Banerjea, lived to be denounced as a reactionary hireling of Government, and in his memoirs he retaliated by expressing contempt for the unseemly violence of the non-co-operators and deploring their intolerance. Moderation being an attitude rather than a political doctrine, there have been many examples among Indian public men of leaders who, once moderates, became extremists and of others who, once extremists, became moderates.

It was in 1907 that there came the first collision between moderates and extremists. Mr. Gokhale, one of the most sagacious and clear-sighted of moderate leaders, had during that year delivered more than one speech in which he deprecated violence and unconstitutional methods. He warned his hearers that their reliance must be on what

was called constitutional agitation, and that redress must be obtained through the constitutional authorities. They were told, he said, that they must give up having anything to do with the government of the country and that by the simple expedient of a universal boycott they would be able to achieve everything. He deprecated an industrial boycott because it really implied a vindictive desire to injure another, even if one had to injure oneself in doing so. To talk of a general boycott of government services in their situation was, he said, ludicrous in the extreme.

But great as was Mr. Gokhale's influence, he had no authority over the extremists, who looked to Mr. Tilak as their chief and who, far from accepting the teachings of the moderates, were resolved to wrest the Congress from their control. The Congress of 1907 was held at Surat. When the election of a moderate president was proposed, shoes and slippers were flung at the leaders on the platform, which was then carried by storm. The police were called in to clear the Congress tent, and the proposer and his friends were smuggled away to a place of safety. Only when the field had been abandoned by the Tilakites did the remaining delegates reassemble and formulate the Congress creed, declaring that self-government was the goal of Congress, but that it was to be attained by purely constitutional means. Unhappily this encounter with the extremists did not teach the moderates the wisdom of avoiding evil communications. They were ever seeking for a reconciliation, partly from an exaggerated desire for unity, and partly from a feeling akin to that of the French Radicals whose motto is 'No enemy on the left'.

The Morley-Minto reforms of 1909 ushered in the Golden Age of the moderates. They were conceived with the idea of 'rallying the moderates' by giving them a great constitutional advance which would enable them to

triumph over the extremists. Lord Morley had been much taken with Mr. Gokhale, the able moderate leader, of whom he wrote to Lord Minto: 'He has a politician's head; appreciates executive responsibility; has an eye for the tactics of practical common sense.' It might be said that the Morley reforms were composed with an eye on Mr. Gokhale for the leading part, and that discreet leader lauded the 'generous and fair nature' of the new constitution and called for its grateful acceptance. Co-operation with Government, he urged, must take the place of mere criticism of the Government. He pleaded for a loyal acquiescence in British rule, first, because 'considering the difficulties of the position, Britain had done very well in India', and secondly, because 'there was no alternative to British rule and could be none for a long time'. More notable even than these declarations was his condemnation of the active participation of students in politics. The Bengal leaders had deliberately appealed to schoolboys and students for help in their boycott of Lancashire goods, with the result that misguided youths became the tools of the revolutionaries in carrying out bomb outrages and murders. Mr. Gokhale, on the contrary, took the view that 'the active participation of students in political agitation really tends to lower the dignity and the responsible character of public life and to impair its true effectiveness. It also fills the students themselves with unhealthy excitement, often evoking in them a bitter partisan spirit which cannot fail to interfere with their studies and prove injurious to their intellectual and moral growth'. In the same speech Mr. Gokhale declared that the attainment by India of 'self-government such as obtains in other parts of the Empire must depend upon the average strength of character and capacity of our people as a whole, for it is on our average strength that the weight of the edifice of

self-government will have to rest. And here it must be regretfully admitted that our average strength to-day is far below the British average'.

The discussions in the reformed legislature justified, as a whole, the expectations of Lord Minto and Lord Morley. They afforded ample means for debating new legislation and the budgets of the provinces, and as there was a non-official majority in the provincial Legislative Councils, non-officials enjoyed occasionally the novel pleasure of defeating the Government. In the Imperial Legislative Council (as it was then styled), though an official majority was retained, the opinions expressed in debate had their effect on the Government, and the fact that a Government defeat was virtually impossible did not diminish the sense of responsibility shown by leading speakers.

Probably but for the War the Morley-Minto Councils would have met Indian requirements for a considerable period. They provided an arena for debate, an opportunity for Indian politicians to criticize the Government, and for the Government to explain and defend its policy. The War induced an unwonted degree of co-operation with the Government on the part of the moderates, and at the same time led to unscrupulous efforts to stir up trouble, for the revolutionaries naturally recognized that England's preoccupation with a great struggle gave them a unique opportunity of success. The discovery of a widespread conspiracy showed the necessity of a Defence of India Act on the model of the measure enacted in England. The moderates and others raised their usual objections to provisions for dealing effectively with revolutionary crime and terrorism, and even in the crisis of a terrible conflict the official majority of the Government was required to put the measure through.

Happily the president of the National Congress which

met in Bombay in 1915 was Mr. Sinha, afterwards Lord Sinha, and his address counselled his countrymen to work patiently until free institutions developed for India by gradual evolution and cautious progress. This may be regarded as the swan song of the Congress as a moderate assembly. For, despite the prudent views of Mr. Sinha, the Congress committee modified its rules to allow of the readmission of Mr. Tilak and his followers, who contemptuously rejected the idea that India was not fitted for the immediate concession of self-government. In October of the following year Mrs. Besant founded her Home Rule League, and in the same month nineteen Indian members of the Imperial Legislative Council presented a memorandum to the Indian Government in which they complained of the inadequacy of the Morley-Minto reforms, since they established councils which were merely advisory bodies without any power of effective control over the central Government or the provincial Governments, and claimed that Indian loyalty during the War had earned a right to parliamentary institutions.

The increasing impatience of the moderates with the reforms of 1909, their pathetic desire for conciliation with the extremists, and the eagerness of both groups to profit by the resettlement which would follow the conclusion of the War led to negotiations which culminated in a reunion of moderates and extremists in the historic Congress of Lucknow in 1916, at which Mr. Tilak made a triumphant re-entry. The venerable Mr. Ambica Charan Mazumdar, famed in the fight against the partition of Bengal, presided; and formulated a series of demands which embraced dyarchy in the central Government, complete autonomy in the provinces, and the enlisting of a national militia. A resolution praying that the King might issue a proclamation announcing the intention of

the British Government to 'confer self-government on India at an early date' was moved by Mr. Surendranath Banerjea, a moderate, and supported by Mr. Tilak, an extremist, and Mrs. Besant.

Nor was the passion for unity confined to the Congress. Representatives of the Congress and of the Muslim League, which was also meeting at Lucknow, conferred and agreed upon the proportions of Hindu and Muslim representation in the legislatures of an autonomous India, and the president of the Muslim League, Mr. Jinnah, though he represented only a section of the Muslims of the Punjab or of the United Provinces, declared that in the name of 70 million Muslims the League would accept the Congress scheme of reforms.

On no occasion perhaps did the moderates more fully justify their name and policy than in their attitude to the reforms of 1919. The publication of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report on 8 July 1918 was hailed with an angry condemnation from the nationalists. A manifesto issued in Madras declared that the report was so radically wrong in principle and detail that it was impossible to modify or improve it. Mr. Tilak pronounced the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme to be 'entirely unacceptable'. A special session of the Congress was summoned to consider the report. The moderates hesitated whether they should attend this Congress or not. 'We decided to abstain,' writes Sir Surendranath Banerjea in his memoirs; 'we felt that these hasty and extreme views would dominate the deliberations of the Congress, and that we should not lend them the weight of our support by our presence.' This was a heroic decision, for it meant separation from the great institution which the moderates had built up. But they felt that the difference between them and those who had captured the machinery of the Congress was

fundamental, and that upon a matter equally fundamental, the question of self-government for India. 'The Congress, however great an organization, was after all only a means to an end. The end was self-government. We decided to sacrifice the means to the end. That was the *raison d'être* of the moderates or Liberal party as a separate entity in the public life of India.' It is in these terms that Sir Surendranath Banerjea describes the liberal schism, which was signified by the holding of a moderate conference in Bombay on 1 November 1918.

Both nationalists and moderates sent representatives to appear before the Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament to which the Reforms Bill was referred. But the nationalist witnesses created a poor impression, and hence failed to make any practical contribution to the shaping of the Bill. The moderates, on the contrary, earned the good opinion of British parliamentarians by their statemanship, with the result that the Joint Committee accepted their views on several important matters. The moderates secured, for instance, the abandonment of the provision of a separate purse for the transferred subjects, though some of them, when later they became Ministers, came to doubt the wisdom of their demand. But at the time they were elated over their triumph in the Joint Committee, and their prestige was undoubtedly raised by their tangible success, not only in England but also in India.

The moderates, thanks to their policy of supporting the reformed legislatures, and to the blunder of their opponents in boycotting these institutions, had the advantage of dominating the first central Legislative Assembly, and the provincial Legislative Councils. What is more, the most formidable asset of their rivals, Mr. Gandhi, was in 1922 arrested and convicted of sedition, and his personality

ceased to exercise any effect for the time being. They turned their opportunities to good use in some directions, and gained a publicity which speedily convinced a large section of the swarajists of the mistake that they had made in absenting themselves from the Councils. Yet one of the moderates' first steps was to carry a motion declaring that the Assembly was of opinion that the progress made by India on the path to responsible government warranted a re-examination or revision of the constitution at an earlier date than 1929. Viscount Peel, as Secretary for India, confirmed the opinion of his predecessor that a period of six months was not sufficient to justify the Assembly in concluding that the possibilities of the Act of 1919 were exhausted; and a certain amount of surprise was felt in England and in India that Indian politicians who had claimed the Act of 1919 as a triumph for them should so speedily have begun to complain of its inadequacy.

A great and unexpected opportunity was offered to the moderates by the dissensions which had broken out among their opponents. Pundit Motilal Nehru and Mr. C. R. Das seem to have realized that the non-co-operation movement had failed. It had achieved nothing except violence and crime, and Mr. Gandhi himself had been compelled to cancel the only part of his programme which appealed to the mob and to fall back on the spinning-wheel. Meanwhile the moderates, dominant in the central Assembly, were exercising a very real influence in its dignified proceedings and were achieving substantial results which might well have impressed the educated classes. It would seem indeed that, by a curious irony of events, the swarajists were more conscious of the success of the moderates than were the moderates themselves. At any rate the swarajist leaders determined, even at the cost of dividing their party, to enter the legislatures; and in spite

of fierce opposition from the supporters of 'no change', they won at the special Congress held in Delhi in September 1923.

The natural course for the moderates to pursue would have been to drive home this remarkable change of front, and claim the credit for themselves and for the Assembly in which they had played a successful part. Instead of doing this, they proceeded to discredit the Assembly by harping on their reverses and demanding a radical advance in the constitution. In short, they adopted a line of criticism in which the swarajists could easily surpass them in violence. To this source of weakness was added a timidity about being identified with the Government, a desire to show the same dislike as the swarajists for such measures as the Seditious Meetings Act, and in general a failure to recognize that their strength consisted not in resembling the swarajists as far as possible but in differing from them.

In the event they were heavily defeated at the elections of 1923. It is clear that the main cause of this rout was that, instead of having the electoral field to themselves, they had to contend with swarajists who had previously let the elections go by default. But the fact that a considerable number of independents were returned against swarajist opposition shows that this explanation is not sufficient in itself. There was a similar triumph of the swarajists in the provinces. In Bengal they formed the largest group: in the Central Provinces they had a clear majority. In fact the moderates were handicapped by their want of electoral organization; for, though Mr. Sastri and others had emphasized the need of a whole-time organization, little was done to make good this want. There was moreover a lack of party unity which contrasted with the discipline of the swarajists, who were not only well organized but insisted upon the subservience of

their candidates to a definite party policy, and hence, though not possessing a majority, were able by regular attendance, and by pressure on other members, to inflict defeats on the Government.

In the Legislative Assembly of 1923 the Liberals were reduced to nullity, but their demand for a constitutional advance before the appointed date for an inquiry was taken up by the swarajists. The Government announced that they were prepared to grant an inquiry into the working of the Act of 1919, and, if advances or amendments within the limits of this Act were shown to be desirable, to notify the Secretary of State. To any changes, however, which would require the amendment of the Act the Government declined to commit themselves. The committee to which the inquiry was entrusted produced a majority report (Cmd. 2360, 1925) which declared against any material change as being premature but recommended certain modifications provided for in the Act. The minority report, on the contrary, urged the abolition of the dyarchy of the 1919 reforms.

The report revealed the manner in which the various provincial legislatures had worked the Act of 1919 and incidentally threw light upon the strength and organization of the moderates. As the Congress party in most provinces had adhered to the policy of boycotting the Councils, the moderates had the advantage of occupying the new ministerial offices. In Bengal 'the Ministers started with no real party of adherents on whom they could rely for support in their policy of administration. As time went on, however, they succeeded in consolidating a fairly compact group of followers on whom they could rely'. On the contrary, the swarajists, when they decided to enter the Council, came in as 'a compact and very well disciplined party'. In Madras, where non-Brahmin

Ministers were appointed because of the overwhelming non-Brahmin majority returned to the Council, Ministers were embarrassed by the inadequate funds at their disposal, but they were not prepared to shoulder the responsibility of proposing new taxes in order to finance reforms. But the Ministers strongly supported the Government in legislating against non-co-operation directed against the revenue, and the Madras Government attributed to the energetic efforts of Ministers the manner in which the legislature rallied to the cause of law and order. In other provinces than Madras the position of Ministers was very similar to that which obtained in Bengal. The moderate Ministers were in truth leaders without organized parties, and lacked a definite programme, while there was a want of moderate organization in the electorate.

Lord Morley had endeavoured to 'rally the moderates' by passing the Morley-Minto reforms, and had to some extent succeeded in securing their co-operation with the Government against sedition. It might have been expected that the Montagu-Chelmsford report would have produced a still more courageous and practical confidence in the sincerity both of the British Government and the Government of India. But when in 1919 the Rowlatt Bills were introduced, the moderates were weighed and found wanting. These Bills were based upon the recommendations of a committee, presided over by the English judge, Mr. Justice Rowlatt, which made an exhaustive inquiry into the long series of crimes due to the revolutionary movement in Bengal and elsewhere and into the difficulties of obtaining the conviction of accused persons under the ordinary law. The committee was satisfied as to the widespread activities of the revolutionists and as to the extent to which the police had been baffled, before the War, by the terrorism practised on witnesses. It found that the

Defence of India Act, necessitated by the War, had greatly reduced the number of outrages because under its provisions restrictions could be imposed upon persons implicated in revolutionary propaganda and conspiracy without bringing them to trial, and it recommended that the provisions which had been thus effective should be added to the criminal law. As the Defence of India Act would lapse after the close of the War, and it would thus become necessary to release a number of dangerous anarchist organizers, a temporary measure to avert this undesirable result was needed. Hence the introduction of two Bills, one to deal with the immediate result of the lapse of the Defence Act and the other to strengthen the ordinary law. There was nothing in the Bills which had not been proved to be necessary to deal with terrorism and crimes of violence. As for the contention that the provisions for detention might be abused, it was pointed out that the cases of 800 persons detained as State prisoners in Bengal had been investigated by two judges, and only six of the whole number were recommended for release.

One moderate only, Mr. P. C. Mitter, a lawyer, and a member of the Rowlatt Committee, and therefore familiar with the evidence laid before the committee, offered a full and uncompromising defence of adequate measures for the prevention of revolutionary crime. 'If the ordinary laws of the country', he said in the Bengal Legislative Council, 'are not sufficient in dealing with crimes like this, and if the Defence of India Act really stamped out the crimes which were a disgrace to society—crimes which every patriotic Indian ought to feel sorry for—then how can any responsible public man suggest to nullify the results of such action?'

Unhappily the moderates in the Imperial legislature, in the face of the overwhelming evidence, joined in the

violent opposition of the extremists whose vituperation knew no bounds. Rumours were current in the bazaars that the Rowlatt Act would enable the Government to tax a man to the extent of half his income, that marriages and funerals would be taxed, and that crops might be commandeered. The time was one of economic discontent and people were prepared to believe every evil ascribed to the Government. But the moderates uttered no word in contradiction of the lies on which popular delusions were nourished, and thought it no part of their business to correct the grotesque fears created in part by their own immoderate rhetoric.

The agitation was intensified by the intervention of Mr. Gandhi, who announced a campaign of passive resistance. Some moderates of the central legislature expressed their sense of the dangers of such a movement, though not with the downright emphasis with which Mrs. Besant warned Mr. Gandhi of the mob lawlessness which he was then unloosing. Her warning was verified by events. Passive resistance, as interpreted by the mob, meant riot, the burning of public buildings and murderous attacks on European officials. When order was restored by the application of martial law, Mrs. Besant showed the moderate leaders the way by a vigorous reply to critics in which she wrote:

> 'None, I presume, will contend that the Government should look on while mobs murdered, wrecked banks, fired railway stations. Do they then think that it is more merciful to give a mob its head . . . than to stop it at the very outset of violence at a cost of a score of lives, or will my critics say at what stage the Government should intervene? Let us, for this time of danger, drop all criticism of Government action and stand firmly against revolution which means bloodshed at home and invasion from abroad.'

Rejecting this advice, the moderate leaders on the contrary vied with the extremists in condemning the repressive

action of Government and said nothing against the murderous campaign which had necessitated this action.

We may now pass on to the attitude of the moderates to the Statutory (Simon) Commission of 1928–30. When the British Government decided to meet the wishes of Indian politicians by initiating the statutory inquiry earlier than 1929, they adopted the form of investigation which seemed to be indicated by the Act of 1919. To prevent any misunderstanding, however, the Viceroy took into his confidence a number of Indian political leaders to whom he explained the reasons which had caused the Home Government to resolve upon a purely parliamentary form of inquiry. The swarajists, who had declared that they would be satisfied with nothing less than a Round Table Conference to draw up an Indian constitution, would naturally oppose the statutory inquiry. But the moderates, as supporters of constitutional methods, would surely uphold the decision of the Home Government. This expectation was disappointed. While some former swarajists held back from a boycott of the Commission until it could be seen whether the arrangements for co-operating Indian committees were satisfactory, Sir Tej Bahadar Sapru, a prominent Liberal leader, attacked the Commission because of the exclusion of Indians, which he denounced as an insult to national self-respect. Presiding over the conference of the National Liberal Federation in Bombay he declared that they must repudiate the Commission, and it was resolved to call upon Legislative Councils and the public to hold aloof from the inquiry at all stages. Thus was seen the paradox of moderates proclaiming a boycott different only from that decreed by the Congress party in that the latter were better organized to carry the boycott into effect. Strikes and rowdyism greeted the arrival of the Commissioners in Madras,

Calcutta, and elsewhere, and for these proceedings Indian Liberals cannot disclaim some moral responsibility. But though the Congress party and the Liberals co-operated in attempting to thwart the Commission, and though the responsive co-operators and some Muslim leaders ultimately adhered to the boycott, the main result was to deprive themselves of a valuable opportunity. The majority of the Muslims and the non-Brahmins decided to co-operate with Sir John Simon and his colleagues, and eight out of the nine Legislative Councils resolved to appoint committees to join in the inquiry.

The moderates, both Liberals and Independents, having boycotted the Simon Commission, awaited its report with uneasiness. The Congress politicians showed indifference, for they had resolved that, failing the acceptation by the British Parliament of the Nehru scheme of reforms within twelve months, they would start a new campaign of non-co-operation. To the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, it seemed that something should be done to relieve the tense atmosphere. During a visit to England in 1929 he received from the Home Government authority to make a declaration which gave an assurance that the natural goal of India's advance was Dominion status and which intimated that when the Simon Commission had presented its report a Round Table Conference would be held at which Indian politicians would be asked to collaborate with British Ministers in seeking a common basis on which could be formulated proposals to be placed before Parliament. Moderates and Muslims were favourably impressed, and even Congress leaders issued a manifesto in which they said they hoped to be able to co-operate with the Government on certain conditions. Accordingly the Viceroy towards the end of 1929 held a conference of Congress representatives and of the Liberal leaders. The conference

proved fruitless, since the two Congress leaders would not budge from the demand that the sole function of the Round Table Conference should be to draft a constitution conferring at once Dominion status. From the negotiations the two Congress leaders proceeded to a meeting of that body in which the left wing dominated. It was decided that Congress should send no representatives to London and should start a campaign of civil disobedience.

The Liberals remained strangely inactive in the face of a desperate attempt to paralyse British administration; and even when a long series of outrages revealed that civil disobedience was producing its usual harvest of violent crimes, amidst the applause and incitements of an extremist press, the Liberal Federation had no more useful assistance to offer to a harassed Government amidst ever-increasing disorders than to demand in May 1930 the immediate repeal of the press ordinances and the release of political offenders not proved guilty of actual violence. Their attitude contrasted with that of other moderates. The leaders of the non-Brahmin party lifted their voices against civil disobedience. The All-India Muslim Federation warned Muslims to take no part in the agitation, and Mr. Muhamad Ali, an ally of Mr. Gandhi in an earlier non-co-operation campaign, denounced the tactics of Congress. In midsummer 1930, when Mr. Gandhi and Pandit Motilal Nehru were in prison, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar requested the Viceroy's permission to visit the incarcerated leaders in order to persuade them to 'allow the big issue of constitutional advance to be solved in a calm atmosphere'. But Mr. Gandhi and the Pandit, instead of abating their conditions, supplemented them with others still more extravagant.

The moderates ultimately left for London amidst the maledictions of Congress sympathizers, but they found

St. James's Palace a more favourable field of operations. It is true that the deliberations lacked finality, largely because the moderates were not in a position to speak for the absent Congress leaders, but Sir Tej Bahadar Sapru and Mr. Sastri played with distinction the leading parts in a full-dress rehearsal of a more binding conference at which it was hoped to secure the presence of the whole cast.

The Liberal leaders returned to India early in 1931 with all the prestige of a protracted publicity, and speedily took in hand what seemed the unpromising enterprise of securing the attendance of Mr. Gandhi in London. Their appeals to the Congress Working Committee were, however, much assisted by the many signs that the civil disobedience campaign was collapsing amidst general weariness of the sacrifices it demanded from its exponents. The Liberal leaders thus resuscitated the Congress leader at the last moment, gave him the glory of negotiating the Gandhi-Irwin pact of March 1931, and the place of honour at the second Round Table Conference towards the end of 1931.

If the Liberal leaders hoped that the discussions at the resumed conference would bring Mr. Gandhi into a better understanding with themselves and with the moderates, they were soon undeceived. The Congress envoy himself complained that on most of the matters discussed he was in a minority of one. In the lengthy and elaborate deliberations of the conference and its committees upon such thorny subjects as racial distinctions, commercial discrimination, the encouragement of Indian industries, the future of the British Army in India, the control of the Army during the period of transition, the British and Indian representatives were able to arrive at a reasonable measure of agreement largely through the

moderation and fair-mindedness of the moderates, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Sastri, Mr. Jayakar, and others. Mr. Gandhi, on the contrary, hinted not obscurely that, as the British Government had not complied with the demands of the Congress, it would be his duty to revert to non-co-operation.

Mr. Sastri, in a parting appeal to the Congress leader, told him that the circumstances of to-day demanded that he should change his plans, dismiss civil disobedience from his mind, and take up the work of constitution—building 'in a spirit of complete trust in us, and of faith in the British people'. It was a strange spectacle, that of so eminent an Indian statesman pleading that Mr. Gandhi should recognize that 'there is some knowledge, some wisdom, some patriotism even outside the ranks of the Congress which you so much worship'.

Chapter V

MUHAMMADAN MOVEMENTS

By SIR THEODORE MORISON, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., C.B.E.

[Sir Theodore Morison is well known as an accomplished interpreter of Muslim life and sentiment, with which he has been in close contact for over forty years. He joined the staff of the great Muhammadan college at Aligarh in northern India as long ago as 1889, and was its principal for six years from 1899. He was president of the Muhammadan educational conference in 1904. He was a member of the Council of India in London for ten years from 1906, and after various war services was principal of the Armstrong College at Newcastle from 1919 to 1929.]

THE total population of All-India, without Burma, is 338 millions; of these 77 millions are Muslims. Some of these Muslims are descendants of the Arabs, Afghans, and Turks who came down from the heights of Central Asia in successive waves of conquest, but the greater number are by blood natives of the soil, high-born Rajputs, hard-working Sudras, or lowly outcastes who were converted to Islam by nameless missionaries or by those famous saints whose tombs are to this day visited by countless pilgrims. When these Indians had once become members of the great brotherhood of Islam they adopted the civilization of Bagdad and Shiraz and drew their ideas from the literatures of Arabia and Persia. The Muslim population in India was increased and strengthened from yet another source; from the days of Kutbuddin Aibak in the thirteenth century down to the death of Aurangzeb in the eighteenth century, a continuous stream of soldiers and scholars, of artists and administrators came to take service under Muslim kings from the highly civilized cities of central Asia; many of these men wrote their names upon the pages of Indian history and founded families which are still held

in high esteem. Owing to the caste system of the Hindus, these Muslim invaders and converts were not merged in the general population but remained a distinct people, like the Hungarians in Rumania, or the Germans in the Baltic provinces, proud of their political ascendancy and their superior civilization. After the establishment of British rule, the Muslims gradually lost their prerogatives. Persian, which was specifically the Muslim tongue in India, ceased under the Governor-Generalship of Lord William Bentinck (1828–35) to be the official language, and with it the service of the State which had been for generations the hereditary occupation of the middle and upper classes of Muslim society passed into other hands. In 1857 came the catastrophe of the Mutiny, for which the English believed, wrongly, that the Muslims were mainly responsible; the phantom sovereignty of the Mogul Emperor was abolished, the noble families which had followed his fallen fortunes were ruined or dispersed, and Delhi ceased to be a Muslim city. All over India Muslim civilization was in evident decay. The Maulvis, the religious leaders of the people, from a mistaken loyalty to Islam, forbade their followers under pain of eternal damnation from acquiring the learning of the *Firanghi* (Franks, i.e. Europeans). The Muslims were thereby excluded from all the liberal professions. For the public services a knowledge of English had now become indispensable; law, medicine, and engineering had been revolutionized by the introduction of European ideas and could only be studied to any purpose in English text-books. While Bengali Hindus, Madrasis, and Marathas inspired by the arts and sciences of Europe were experiencing an intellectual and moral renaissance, the Muslims all over India were falling into a state of material indigence and intellectual decay.

It was in these circumstances that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817–98) started the great movement of thought which was to inspire the Muslims with new life. Sir Syed was first and last a religious reformer; he summoned his people to return to the sanity and simplicity of primitive Islam. He denounced the superstitions and bigotry with which their faith had become encrusted; he told his people that the only instrument which could accomplish this regeneration was education and that education must be on western lines; there was nothing contrary to the principles of Islam, he said, in the acquisition of western learning—as the Maulvis ignorantly proclaimed. Had not the Prophet said: 'Go even to the Walls of China for the sake of learning.' The English were possessed of arts and sciences more valuable than those of China, and from them the Muslims could learn without danger to their religion, for God himself had said that the true believers would find their best friends in the People of the Book (Christians and Jews). Sir Syed was violently attacked for his courageous opinions and suffered much social persecution, but no persecution could daunt his leonine courage; his great personality prevailed at length over opposition and misrepresentation, and in the last years of his life he exercised a marvellous ascendancy over Muslim opinion. When he was laid to rest by the side of the mosque of the college in Aligarh, a lifelong friend of his said to me: 'Other men have written books and founded colleges; but to arrest as with a wall the degeneration of a whole people, that is the work of a prophet.' That remark conveys, in my opinion, a correct judgement of Sir Syed's personality and of the quality of his work. For myself I can say that I have never met another man so great as he.

Sir Syed was frequently summoned to the Legislative Council of the Governor-General and he had considerable

influence upon public policy, but he abstained from political propaganda, which he condemned as dangerous to the country and undesirable for his own people, because it was likely to deflect them from the task of moral and intellectual regeneration—the only thing that mattered. When, however, the Indian National Congress began to criticize the Government and demand the establishment of representative institutions in India upon the pattern of western democracy, he felt obliged to speak out. At Lucknow on 28 December 1887, when the National Congress was holding its third session in Madras, he warned the Muslims of the evils which they would suffer from majority rule and of the bloody consequences of political agitation. He told his hearers that in the existing state of communal temper, Muslims would always vote for a Muslim candidate at the polls and Hindus for a Hindu candidate; and as the Hindus formed the majority of the population no Muslim would ever be elected. But though he recognized the unhappy state of feeling between Hindus and Muslims he deplored it. 'There is no person', he said, shortly after his Lucknow speech, 'who desires more than I that friendship and union should exist between the two peoples of India and that one should help the other. I have often said that India is like a bride whose two eyes are the Hindus and Muslims. Her beauty consists in this that her two eyes be of equal lustre.' And he went on to say: 'I have often given my nation to understand that slaughtering cows for the purpose of annoying Hindus is the height of cantankerous folly; if friendship may exist between us and them, that friendship is far to be preferred to the sacrifice of cows.'

Sir Syed Ahmad died in 1898, but the political opinions of which he disapproved suffered no abatement. The demand for representative institutions grew more insistent,

and it became apparent that English opinion was favourable to this method of enlarging Indian liberties. The Muslims became so seriously concerned that in 1906 they took a deputation to the Viceroy, Lord Minto, and requested that, if this form of government should be introduced into India, Muslims should be protected by special safeguards; they laid particular stress upon their demand for separate electorates, that is, for the right of themselves electing their own representatives upon municipalities, rural boards, and provincial legislatures. Lord Minto expressed his agreement with the principle for which they contended, and was thus the first to give the Muslims a pledge to which they attach great importance and which has since been often repeated. By their visit to Simla, the leaders of the Muslim community were so convinced that serious changes were impending that they resolved to abandon their aloofness from popular politics, and in December 1906 they founded the All-India Muslim League. From this time forward the Muslims have been an organized party in Indian politics.

Events soon showed the need for some such organization. Very shortly afterwards, the extension of Indian liberties, commonly known as the Morley-Minto reforms, became the subject of public discussion, and the All-India Muslim League was the agency by which vigorous representations were made both in India and in England. The points upon which special emphasis was laid were that in any system of representation introduced into India (1) the Muslims should have the right of electing their own representatives by means of special electorates, and (2) the number of seats allotted to Muslims should be in excess of their ratio to the general population. The grounds upon which they based the first claim were:

(*a*) In the existing state of tension between the two great

communities, no Muslim who sincerely represented the opinions of his community could secure election in a general (i.e. mixed or joint) electorate, since in all but two provinces the Muslims were a minority of the population.

(*b*) If the two communities were not kept apart at the polls every contested election would result in communal riots, accompanied by bloodshed, and would leave bitter memories, which would retard the political integration of the country.

(*c*) Where the system of separate electorates had been established in municipalities and district boards, it had worked well and secured peace; it had been devised empirically by British officers in order to avoid recurrent disturbances at election times and had in fact proved successful.

The grounds upon which the Muslims based their second claim was that they did in fact command an amount of influence which was greatly in excess of their ratio to the population. In spite of retrogression in recent years, they still owned much of the landed property in India, they still formed a very large element in the public service, and Muslim soldiers constituted a large proportion of the Indian Army. By the geographical distribution of the Muslim population they were the gate-keepers of India, and upon them must fall the principal burden of repelling a foreign invasion. They confessed that owing to a mistaken interpretation of the behests of their religion they had lagged behind others in English education, but maintained that their ascendancy, due to historical causes, was a fact which could not be ignored in estimating public opinion.

These claims were combated by the Hindu politicians of the Congress, but were accepted as valid by the

Government of India, by the Secretary of State, and by the House of Commons. On 1 April 1909 Mr. T. R. Buchanan, the Under Secretary of State for India, said:

'And more than that, particularly with regard to the Muhammadans, they have a special and overwhelming claim upon us, namely the solemn promises, given by those who are entitled with full responsibility to speak for us, that they should get adequate representation to the amount and of a kind they want—a promise given to them by Lord Minto specifically in October 1906, repeated in a despatch by the Secretary of State to a deputation here and in another place. From that promise we cannot go back, we ought not to go back, and we will not go back.'

The undertakings thus given were kept, and the claims of the Muslims were satisfied in the enactments which embodied the Morley-Minto reforms of 1909.

It would be a mistake to infer from what has been said above that the Muslims were concerned only with the protection of their own special interests. In fact the Muslims shared most of the aspirations of the educated Hindus; they desired to see the end of racial ascendancy and demanded that the children of the soil should have a voice in the administration of their own country. Upon this point Sir Syed Ahmad had been in advance of the Congress. As early as 1888 he had reproached the British Government with passionate eloquence for not giving commissions in the Army to Indians.

'A second error of Government', he said at Lucknow, 'is that it does not give appointments in the Army to those brave people whose ancestors did not use the pen to write with; no, but a different kind of pen—nor did they use black ink but the ink in which they dipped their pens was the red, red ink which flows from the bodies of men. O brothers, I have fought the Government in the harshest language about these points. The time is, however, coming when my brothers, Pathans, Syeds, Hashimi and Koreishi, whose blood smells of the blood of Abraham, will appear in glittering uniforms as Colonels and Majors in the Army.'

These words deserve to be remembered as evidence of the deep resentment which Muslims have felt, and not in recent years only, at their exclusion from positions of command. It was a realization that the emancipation which they both desired was retarded by their dissensions, which brought the Hindu and Muslim parties to come to an agreement upon the system of elections and the distribution of administrative posts in the future government. This was the celebrated Lucknow Pact, ratified by the National Congress on 29 December and by the Indian Muslim League on 31 December 1916. According to this scheme the Muslims were to be represented through special electorates on the provincial legislatures in the following proportions: Punjab, 50 per cent. of the Indian elected members; United Provinces, 30 per cent.; Bengal, 40 per cent.; Bihar, 25 per cent.; Central Provinces, 15 per cent.; Madras, 15 per cent.; and Bombay, 33·3 per cent. As regards the All-Indian legislature, it was approved that one-third of the Indian elected members should be Muslims elected by separate Muslim electorates in the several provinces in the proportion as nearly as possible in which they were represented in the provincial Legislative Councils.

This agreement governed the relations between the two communities when the next instalment of popular government was under consideration. In their report of April 1918 Lord Chelmsford and Mr. Montagu discussed 'communal' electorates in the abstract, and they regretted the necessity of retaining them in India. 'At the same time,' they said, 'we must face the hard facts. The Muhammadans were given special representation with separate electorates in 1909. The Hindu acquiescence is embodied in the present agreement between the political leaders of the two communities. The Muhammadans regard these

as settled facts, and any attempt to go back on them would raise a storm of bitter protest.' The claims for which the Muslim League had contended since its foundation in 1906 were recognized in the franchise system which was to be the foundation of 'dyarchy'.

But at the time of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms the Indian Muslims could pay but little attention to internal politics. They were too deeply preoccupied with the fortunes of Turkey. Ever since Italy's buccaneering raid upon Tripoli, they were convinced that the Christian powers had determined to break up the last remnants of Muslim power. Persia, they saw, was marked out for division between Great Britain and Russia; the Christian states in the Balkans united in an unprovoked assault upon Turkey; France was given by Europe a free hand to exercise a protectorate over Morocco. When the Turks indicated that they were about to enter the Great War on the side of the Central Powers, the Indian Muslims attempted in vain to persuade them to remain neutral. Muslim regiments fought with loyalty and gallantry in Mesopotamia and on the Suez Canal by the side of British regiments, but they had little joy in the defeat of their 'Muslim brethren', and they trusted that after a suitable defeat the Turkish Sultan would be restored to his possessions. The English officers who knew their men were anxious that no harsh terms should be imposed upon the Turks, and it was to secure the continued support of the Muslim troops that the English Prime Minister made his celebrated declaration about the war aims of the Allies in January 1918. 'Nor are we fighting', said Mr. Lloyd George, 'to deprive Turkey of its capital or of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thrace which are predominantly Turkish in race.' When, therefore, the Greek Army was launched upon a campaign against the

remnant of the Turkish Army, the Indian Muslims felt intense indignation, and all their sympathies were concentrated upon the tattered battalions that were making the last stand of Islam in the Anatolian mountains. Englishmen sometimes ask why the Indian Muslims should feel so much for the Turks, and the answer they generally receive is: 'Oriental fanaticism.' As a matter of fact their sympathy is not born of bigotry or fanaticism, though there are bigots and fanatics among Muslims as among Christians. It is the sympathy which springs from a common manner of life, common usages, and common ideals. For Islam is more than a creed; it is a civilization, just as Christendom is a civilization of another type. There are in the world at least three civilizations plainly distinguishable, the Christian, the Islamic, and the Sino-Japanese civilization of the Far East. Each of them is a cultural unity within which many nations, though politically independent, share a common intellectual tradition. Christendom is so immeasurably stronger than the two other civilizations that we often forget that there are spiritual ties which bind us together. But Marshal Lyautey was conscious of them in 1914 when at the outbreak of the War, he exclaimed: 'Mais ils sont fous! Ils sont fous! Une guerre entre Européens, c'est une guerre civile.' The influence of a common civilization transcends the religious opinions of the individual. An Indian Muslim may be a sceptic but he has none the less sympathy with an Arab or a Turk on account of an identity in social usages and intellectual outlook. I remember discussing this subject with Sir Syed Ahmad in the nineties of last century; he said to me: 'When there were many Muslim kingdoms we did not feel much grief when one of them was destroyed; now that so few are left, we feel the loss of even a small one. If Turkey is conquered that will be a great grief,

for she is the last of the great powers left to Islam. We are afraid', he continued, 'that we shall become like the Jews, a people without a country of our own.' The apprehension is just; the characteristics of Islamic civilization can hardly survive under an alien government, especially if that government be a democracy, which inevitably tends towards the standardization of its citizens. The Muslims are not alone in thinking that the world would be poorer if the civilization which inspired the architecture of the Taj and the Alhambra and the poetry of Shaikh Sadi and Omar Khayyam were to perish off the earth.

Cultural affinities are not easy to explain; and though these were, in my opinion, the fundamental reasons for Indian sympathy with the Turks, the leaders of the Khilafat movement decided to rest their case for the restoration of the headship of Islam to the Sultan of Turkey on the narrower ground of an interference with their religion. The late Maulana Muhamad Ali brought a deputation to England and explained to Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, representing the Secretary of State for India, that the Prophet had with his dying breath bidden them preserve the *Jazirat ul Arab* (Arabia, Iraq, Syria, and Palestine) under a purely Muslim Government, and therefore that mandates over Iraq, Syria, and Palestine were contrary to the religious law of Islam. These theological arguments had no influence on the Allies in Paris, though it is known that the Government of India protested strongly against the harsh provisions imposed upon Turkey by the Treaty of Sèvres, and Maulana Muhamad Ali returned to India emptyhanded. There he and his brother Maulana Shaukat Ali began to preach to their co-religionists that the Government of India had trampled the law of Islam under foot, that India was therefore an infidel land, and that it was

the duty of the faithful to leave it for other countries in which Islam was respected. In obedience to this call many thousands of simple Muslims joined the *hijrat* (flight) movement, and took part in a sort of exodus from India. In the North-West Frontier Province and Sind hundreds of families sold their land and property for a mere song, settled up their worldly affairs, placed their wives and children in carts, surrendered the Government rifles entrusted to them for protection against marauders, and departed in the direction of the Khyber Pass. It was calculated that in the one month of August 1920 as many as 18,000 people moved in the direction of Afghanistan. So long as they were not interfered with, the emigrants were perfectly peaceful and orderly, on the best terms with the local officials and displaying neither malice nor resentment against any man. In the depths of its religious sincerity, the *hijrat* movement of 1920 resembled the crusades of Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and the individual suffering which was endured for either cause was very great. Afghanistan is a poor country and quite unable to absorb so large an influx of population. Eventually the Afghan authorities on the border were compelled to turn the *muhajarin* (emigrants) back. As a result the tide of emigration ebbed slowly and fell back to its former home, but the road from Peshawar to Kabul was strewn with graves of old men, women, and children who had succumbed to the hardships of the journey. When the unhappy *muhajarin* returned, they found themselves homeless and penniless; their property which they had sold for a tithe of its value was in the hands of others.

At this juncture a singular partnership upset the familiar formation of Indian parties. Mr. Gandhi, who professed sympathy for all religious movements, had before now spoken with approval of the Khilafat movement, but he

had remained in the Congress camp working for the realization of Hindu policies. He now entered into a close alliance with the leaders of the Khilafat movement, renounced his adhesion to the reforms, and set himself to execute his long-deferred project of applying non-co-operation to India and placed in the forefront of his aims, not the winning of swaraj but the satisfaction of Muslim opinion upon the matter of the Khilafat.

In the tumultuous years that followed Mr. Gandhi was drawn by the forceful personality of Maulana Shaukat Ali farther and farther from his fundamental principle of non-violence. The 'Ali brothers', as the press nicknamed them, followed from the first a perfectly intelligible and straightforward policy. They were, as they frankly declared, 'Muslims first and everything else afterwards'. At heart they had, I suspect, but little sympathy for the doctrine of non-violence, but they were willing to accept any help for the cause to which they were passionately attached; and if Mr. Gandhi could assist them to wrest from the British Government better terms for the Turk and Khalifa they were willing to join forces with him. The results of the joint campaign were not long in becoming manifest; appeals to racial hatred and the defiance of authority soon produced their inevitable consequences; a tide of riot and disorder swept over the country, culminating in a rising of the Moplahs in Malabar in which not British officials but Hindu priests and shop-keepers, landlords and moneylenders were the principal victims. Mr. Gandhi was persuaded by his impetuous coadjutors to speak in praise of 'the brave God-fearing Moplahs', but his Hindu followers began to display an increasing distrust of his political wisdom. On 10 March 1922 Mr. Gandhi was arrested and the artificial coalition between his ill-assorted followers dropped to pieces.

The years that followed were marked by an ever-growing tension between Hindus and Muslims; street affrays and riots were reported from most of the principal cities. In the five years between 1922 and 1927, 450 lives were lost and 5,000 persons injured in communal disturbances. The reason for the steady growth of enmity is not far to seek. It was now patent to every one in India that a further advance in self-government was at hand; the majority let it be clearly understood that self-government was going to be Hindu-government and the minority girded up their loins for a battle in which their existence was at stake. It would be impossible to enumerate the countless disturbances which followed; the announcements in the daily papers followed so fast one upon another as to create the impression that the Pax Britannica had disappeared. The most ferocious, but not the last, occurred on 24 March 1931 at Cawnpore; it originated in a cessation of labour proclaimed by the Cawnpore Congress committee to mark their disapprobation of the execution of an assassin, Bhagat Singh. On this occasion murders, arson, and lootings were widespread for three days; the number of verified deaths was 300, but the death roll was probably between four and five hundred. Many temples and mosques were desecrated or burnt or destroyed, and a very large number of houses were burnt or pillaged.

During this disturbed period the Muslim leaders held many meetings and conferences to reconcile differences of opinion amongst themselves and to formulate a Muslim policy. At Delhi on 1 January 1929 the All-India Muslim Conference passed a carefully worded resolution which may be accepted as an authoritative statement of Muslim opinion. It is here reproduced *in extenso*.

'Whereas, in view of India's vast extent and its ethnological, linguistic, administrative and geographical or territorial divisions,

the only form of Government suitable to Indian conditions is a federal system with complete autonomy and residuary powers vested in the constituent States, the Central Government having control only of such matters of common interest as may be specifically entrusted to it by the constitution;

'And whereas it is essential that no bill, resolution, motion or amendment regarding inter-communal matters be moved, discussed or passed by any legislature, central or provincial, if a three-fourth majority of the members of either Hindu or the Muslim community affected thereby in that legislature oppose the introduction, discussion or passing of such bill, resolution, motion or amendment;

'And whereas the right of Muslims to elect their representatives on the various Indian legislatures through separate electorates is now the law of the land and Muslims cannot be deprived of that right without their consent;

'And whereas in the conditions existing at present in India and so long as those conditions continue to exist, representation in various legislatures and other statutory self-governing bodies of Muslims through their own separate electorates is essential in order to bring into existence a really representative democratic Government;

'And whereas as long as Musalmans are not satisfied that their rights and interests are adequately safeguarded in the constitution they will in no way consent to the establishment of joint electorates, whether with or without conditions;

'And whereas, for the purposes aforesaid, it is essential that Musalmans should have their due share in the central and provincial cabinets;

'And whereas it is essential that representation of Musalmans in the various legislatures and other statutory self-governing bodies should be based on a plan whereby the Muslim majority in those provinces where Musalmans constitute a majority of the population shall in no way be affected and in the provinces in which Musalmans constitute a minority they shall have a representation in no case less than that enjoyed by them under the existing law;

And whereas representative Muslim gatherings in all provinces in India have unanimously resolved that with a view to provide adequate safeguards for the protection of Muslim interests in India as a whole, Musalmans should have the right of 33 per cent. representation of the central legislature and this conference entirely endorses that demand;

'And whereas on ethnological, linguistic, geographical and administrative grounds the province of Sind has no affinity whatever with the rest of Bombay Presidency and its unconditional constitution into a separate province, possessing its own separate legislative and administrative machinery, on the same lines as in other provinces of India is essential in the interests of its people, the Hindu minority in Sind being given adequate and effective representation in excess of their proportion in the population, as may be given to Musalmans in provinces in which they constitute a minority of population;

'And whereas the introduction of constitutional reforms in the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan along such lines as may be adopted in other provinces of India is essential not only in the interests of those provinces but also of the constitutional advance of India as a whole, the Hindu minorities in those provinces being given adequate and effective representation in excess of their proportion in population, as is given to the Muslim community in provinces in which it constitutes a minority of the population;

'And whereas it is essential in the interests of Indian administration that provision should be made in the constitution giving Muslims their adequate share along with other Indians in all services of the State and on all statutory self-governing bodies, having due regard to the requirements of efficiency;

'And whereas, having regard to the political conditions obtaining in India, it is essential that the Indian constitution should embody adequate safeguards for protection and promotion of Muslim education, languages, religion, personal law and Muslim charitable institutions, and for their due share in grants-in-aid;

'And whereas it is essential that the constitution should provide that no change in the Indian constitution shall, after its inauguration, be made by the central legislature except with the concurrence of all the States constituting the Indian federation;

'This Conference emphatically declares that no constitution, by whomsoever proposed or devised, will be acceptable to Indian Musalmans unless it conforms with the principles embodied in this resolution.' [1]

As regards the communal issue, an award was made by the British Government in August 1932 (Cmd. 4147,

[1] For further details of Muslim claims, see *Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session) Proceedings of Committees* (1932), Appendix III, p. 550.

1932). A discussion of this matter will be found in the next chapter.

A review of the political activities of the Indian Muslims during the last half-century shows them to have pursued a fairly consistent policy. They have resented the treatment of Indians as an inferior race and have claimed association in the government on terms of absolute equality. They have supported all measures for liberalizing the administration though not by methods of agitation and terrorism. On the other hand, they have never shown much enthusiasm for popular government. Within their own community, social democracy exists to an extent not yet achieved in England, but of political democracy they are sceptical. From the days of their ascendancy they have inherited a very sane and objective conception of the duties and difficulties of governing a country. They know that the great masses of the Indian population are uneducated and particularly liable to gusts of passion and religious emotion—their own community not excepted: they are not, therefore, easily convinced of the wisdom of entrusting the fortunes of the State to such hands. However, as the British refused, on the one hand, to admit Indians to the higher ranks of the Civil Service and the Army, and, on the other, were positively eager to extend popular (i.e. Indian) control on municipal boards, district boards, and legislatures, they accepted this as the only line of advance open to them. But as soon as it became clear that policy was to be determined by popular vote, they were compelled to consider very seriously what sort of a position they as a community would hold in the India of the future. For this reason their political activities have in the main been devoted to the elaboration of safeguards which would secure them from oppression by a hostile majority, but they have found it very difficult to convince

public opinion in England and in India of the necessity or desirability of these precautions. Their reasoning ran on the following lines. Politicians in India and in England are usually ignorant of any political history but that of Great Britain and possibly France; on this knowledge they base some such general conclusions as this: certain countries marked red, blue, or yellow on the map are inhabited by individuals who all speak the same language, all share the same intellectual outlook on life, and all are bound together by the same memories of national glory or national misfortune; even if they differ from one another about religion, they look upon themselves as one people and wish to remain associated under one national government. As India is all coloured red on the map, it is assumed that all its inhabitants are actuated by similar motives, and it seems therefore perverse or inexplicable of the Muslims to demand special treatment and to ask to be protected from the enmity of neighbours with whom they share the soil. They appear to deny the principle on which national states are founded. When Englishmen looked a little more deeply into the Indian problem, they were willing to concede that some redistribution of provincial frontiers on linguistic lines might be desirable, but they found it harder to realize that two or more distinct peoples might live side by side intermingled in town and village and yet each be conscious of a distinct nationality. Yet this is quite plainly the case in India and in many other countries. The Hindus and Muslims who inhabit one village, one town, or one district belong to two separate nations more distinct and spiritually farther asunder than two European nations. France and Germany are to Europeans the standard example of enemy nations, and yet a young Frenchman may go to Germany for business or study, he may take up

his residence with a German family, share their meals and go with them to the same place of worship; eventually he may marry the daughter of the house and nobody will find therein matter for scandal or surprise. No Muslim can live on such terms in a Hindu family. Sir Abdur Rahim once put this point clearly and courageously: 'Any of us Indian Muslims travelling for instance in Afghanistan, Persia, and Central Asia, among Chinese Muslims, Arabs, and Turks, would at once be made at home and would not find anything to which we are not accustomed. On the contrary in India we find ourselves in all social matters total aliens when we cross the street and enter that part of the town where our Hindu fellow townsmen live.' It is not only in the customs and usages which mark their external life that the two people differ; the sources of their moral and intellectual inspiration are different. The Muslim is inspired by the great literatures of Arabia and Persia, his conduct is influenced by the precepts of Sadi or of the great saints of Islam. The Hindu venerates myriads of gods, demi-gods, and demons of whose very name the Muslim is ignorant, and his daily life is governed by an elaborate code of rules the very reason of which is as unintelligible to the Muslim as to the Christian. Even their newspapers, their novels, and current literature are mutually unintelligible. The Muslim reads his script from right to left, the Hindu books and newspapers are printed from left to right. But it is useless to enumerate the grounds of difference between Hindu and Muslim; the only thing that matters is that they do in fact feel and think of themselves as separate peoples. In all disquisitions on nationality this is the only test which is found to cover all cases. If a certain body of persons think of themselves as one nation and are willing to endure tribulation and material losses in order to remain

together, then they are one people; if they cannot pass this acid test, they are not. Judged by this standard the Muslims of India are a nation. Communal differences, as they are called, are really national jealousies. That is why Sir Muhammad Iqbal declared 'the problem of India is international, not national'.

Chapter VI

THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF COMMUNAL ANTAGONISM, ESPECIALLY BETWEEN HINDUS AND MUHAMMADANS, AND THE COMMUNAL AWARD

By SIR HUGH McPHERSON, K.C.I.E., C.S.I.

[Sir Hugh McPherson served in India for thirty-five years, during the greater part of which he held posts of distinction and responsibility in Bengal and Bihar. He also served for a time as Secretary, Home Department, of the Government of India, and acted as Governor of Bihar and Orissa in 1925. During the later years of his service he had special opportunities of observing the effects of communal strife among the peasantry of Bihar.]

NONE of the difficult problems which have attended the task of constitution building in India has proved more formidable than the adjustment of conflicting communal interests. The purpose of this chapter is to trace the history and causes of these antagonisms, to examine the communal claims, and to discuss the award which was made by the British Government in August 1932 in default of agreement between the interested parties. Attention will be confined to British India, for, although communal trouble is not unknown in the Indian States —witness the case of Kashmir—it has had few open manifestations.

The census of 1931 shows that in British India (without Burma), the Hindus and the Muhammadans cover between them 95 per cent. of the total population, their numbers being respectively 177·2 millions (69·0 per cent.) and 66·5 millions (25·9 per cent.) out of the total of 256·8 millions. All others are numerically unimportant, the principal components being Sikhs, 3·2 millions

(1·2 per cent.); Christians, 3·6 millions (1·4 per cent.); and tribal (animists), 5·1 millions (2 per cent.). It must be borne in mind that the Hindu total includes the great multitude of the depressed classes, variously estimated at from 40 to 60 millions, who claim to be treated in a separate category from caste Hindus. The problems and claims of the smaller minorities, including the depressed classes, are discussed in the next chapter, and the present chapter therefore deals in the main with the Hindu-Muslim conflict, though it is well to remember that caste Hinduism itself is not free from sub-communal dissension. In all provinces there are symptoms that the intermediate and lower castes are revolting against the social and political domination of the 'twice-born', but it is in southern India that the revolt against Brahmin ascendancy has made most headway. The non-Brahmins of Madras organized themselves as the 'Justice Party' from the inception of the 1921 reforms. They gained a decisive victory in the first elections, winning many of the open seats in addition to twenty-eight reserved for them. Lord Willingdon, as Governor of Madras, chose his first Ministry from their ranks, and they generally justified his confidence. They remain a well-organized force and no longer ask for reservation of seats.

From a political point of view the distribution of the different communities over the provinces is even more important than their aggregate proportions; for, with the exception of the Sikhs in the Punjab, they are not massed together in particular provinces or within well-defined limits in each province, but are diffused and scattered in varying proportions all over India. South of the Vindhyan range, where the invasions of the Muhammadans came centuries after their conquests in northern India, the proportion of the Muslim population is insignificant. In

Madras it is only 7 per cent.; in the Central Provinces less than 5 per cent. Bombay without Sind has a Muslim minority of 9 per cent.; in Sind, where the eighth century witnessed the first Islamic invasion of India by Arabs from the sea, Muhammadans largely preponderate, being over 70 per cent. of the whole. In the central Gangetic area the Muslim element in the population is nearly 15 per cent. in the United Provinces; 11 per cent. in Bihar and Orissa. Muhammadans are in a majority of 55 per cent. in Bengal, for in the eastern districts there was extensive conversion from the lower orders during the centuries of Afghan and Mogul domination. The adjoining province of Assam, partially affected by the same cause, has a Muslim element of 33 per cent. As we move west from the Ganges to the Indus basin, we find the Muhammadans again in a majority. The Punjab population is made up of Muslims, 56 per cent.; Sikhs, 13 per cent.; Hindus, 27 per cent.; other elements, 3 per cent. A large proportion of the Muhammadan majority consists of converts from Hinduism, who either under compulsion or by choice adopted the creed of their Muslim conquerors. The Muhammadan concentration is greatest in the western divisions of the Punjab, adjoining the North-West Frontier Province, where they account for more than 90 per cent. of the whole. The tribal areas of the Frontier Province and Baluchistan are almost exclusively Muslim. The land frontiers of India on the north-west, where alone they are vulnerable, are thus flanked on the Indian side by areas that are preponderatingly Muhammadan.

The story of the Muslim advance into India and of the diffusion of the Islamic faith has been told in the previous chapter. Their history and traditions, their social and cultural characteristics, and their common faith hold together the Indian Muslims as one people, and nothing

that affects their interests in one province is without reaction on their co-religionists throughout India. They have, moreover, an outlook which transcends the limits of India. Their sympathy extends to their co-religionists the whole world over, and this fact has had a profound influence on the political history of India during the past thirty years.

The differences which separate Hindu and Muslim are essentially religious. They may be reinforced by historical tradition, by political rivalries, or by economic contrasts, but for the great masses of the population it is the religious issue alone that counts. The Hindu has many gods in his universe; he reverences the Brahmin; he venerates the cow; and he makes joyful music at his festivals. The Muslim is monotheistic; he is a follower of the Prophet; he reverences the Koran; he excludes music from the mosque. Once a year at the Bakr-Id festival he sacrifices a cow. The slaughter of kine excites the Hindu, and has been the proximate cause of communal rioting in nine cases out of ten. Disturbance of mosque prayers by passing bands of Hindu processionists rouses the darkest passions of Muslim worshippers and has been a frequent preliminary to serious disorder, especially in the larger cities during the last twenty years. Disputes regarding the sites of sacred buildings have been another source of trouble, and a still more fertile cause has been the clash of rival processions. By reason of their different calendars the dates of important Hindu and Muslim festivals coincide in cycles of years, and the possibilities of hostile collision are then greatly increased.

Such purely religious causes explain most of the communal disturbances of which we have record in the earlier years of British rule. Before that time Benares had been a storm centre, since Aurangzeb built his famous mosque

there on the site of an old Hindu temple. In October 1809 there was here a sudden outbreak of great intensity, when Hindu mobs stormed the mosque and put to death every Muslim of the neighbourhood who fell into their hands. 'The entire city was given up to pillage and slaughter: and order was not restored by the troops until some fifty mosques had been destroyed and several hundred people had lost their lives.'[1] In 1871–2 two important Muslim and Hindu festivals clashed and there were riots with heavy casualties at Bareilly and other centres in the United Provinces. In 1885–7 another overlap of festivals led to serious clashes throughout the Punjab and the United Provinces, culminating in the great Delhi riots of 1886. In June 1893 grave outbreaks occurred in the Azamgarh district of the United Provinces in connexion with cow-killing at the Bakr-Id, and in August of the same year there were very serious Muharram riots at Bombay which lasted for six days: eighty persons lost their lives, many mosques and temples were desecrated, and many shops were pillaged.

These older instances of communal trouble are mentioned because it is sometimes suggested that communal collisions are a modern invention, the product of recent political developments. At the second session of the Round Table Conference Mr. Gandhi declared that the quarrel between Hindu and Muhammadan is 'coeval with the British advent' and that it will dissolve when the peoples of India are free. A sufficient answer has been supplied by one of the great landholders of Bengal, who writes: 'The fact is that the religious and cultural feuds between Hindus and Mohammedans go as far back as A.D. 1017 or 1018, when Mahmud of Ghazni conquered the then Hindu centre of India, known as Kanauj, desecrated the holy city of

[1] *Indian Statutory Commission* (H.M.S.O. 1930), vol. iv, pt. i, pp. 96–7.

Muttra and destroyed and pillaged many Hindu temples. Mahmud thus sowed the seeds of hatred and religious animosity which have survived through the ages, bringing a bitterness between Hindus and Mohammedans which breaks out at any moment. . . .'[1]

It was after the Bombay riots of 1893 that Mr. Bal Gangadhar Tilak started his 'Anti-Cow-Killing Society' and began to organize other propaganda, anti-British and anti-Muhammadan, which were designed to stimulate the militant spirit of Hinduism and establish its domination of the Indian political world. The religious basis of communal dissension began from this date to be reinforced by political factors. As explained in Chapter V, Muhammadans, following the advice of their great leader, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, with few exceptions held aloof from the political agitation centred from 1885 onwards in the Indian National Congress. This dissociation was in itself a cause of estrangement between the two communities. Under the influence of the same leader they abandoned their opposition to western education and began to take part more earnestly in the competition for public appointments. In the earliest days of British rule they had been in possession of this field as a heritage from the Mogul empire, but after 1837, when Persian was superseded by the vernaculars in the subordinate courts and by English in the higher offices, they were gradually displaced by Hindus. The Mutiny in 1857 added to their discomfiture, as the blame largely fell on them; but in 1873 the question of Muhammadan education was reviewed by Government, their disabilities and grievances were recognized, and measures were taken to remove them. Since that date Muslims have made steady progress, but they still have

[1] The Maharajadhiraj Bahadur of Burdwan, *The Indian Horizon* (1931), p. 13.

much leeway to make up in their more backward centres of Bengal, the Punjab, and Sind. The competition for government service thus stimulated is one of the healthier communal rivalries which finds frequent expression in the provincial legislatures.

In 1906, as stated in the previous chapter, the Muslim League was founded to protect Muhammadan interests, and in response to demands soon after formulated, the principle of separate representation in the provincial and central legislatures, weighted to allow for their political importance, was conceded to Muhammadans in the Morley-Minto reforms of 1909. This principle has been ever since a source of dispute and negotiation between Hindu and Muslim politicians, but remains firmly established in spite of all attempted compromises.

The partition of Bengal in 1905, though it aroused intense feeling amongst the Hindus of the province, was welcomed by the backward Muhammadans of the eastern districts, to whom it gave new hope. They took no part in the violent agitation, the boycott of British goods, and the revolutionary outrages which followed. On the contrary they resented the tactics of the Hindus, and the conflict came to a head in the dangerous Mymensingh disturbances of May 1907, which took the form of a general rising of the Muhammadan peasantry against their Hindu landlords and creditors. The reversal of the partition in 1911 was a profound disappointment to the Muslim community throughout India. The revulsion of feeling thus caused, combined with their reaction to Turkey's misfortunes in Tripoli, chilled their attitude towards Government and encouraged that *rapprochement* between the Muslim League and the National Congress which was to bear fruit later in the Lucknow Pact of 1916. The entry of Turkey into the War on the side of the enemy

powers placed a further burden on the sympathies of Indian Muslims, and it is everlastingly to their credit that their loyalty stood the strain, except for a small pan-Islamic group which had to be kept under restraint during the War and was to give much trouble after it was over.

The great masses of the population, both Hindu and Muhammadan, cared little for the manœuvres of the politicians or the reactions of the War, and a sinister event was soon to happen which showed that for them the old religious antagonism was still a compelling force in their lives. In 1915 and again in 1916 there had been serious riots in the Patna district of Bihar over cow-sacrifice at the Bakr-Id festival. During the rains of 1917, when the rice fields were full of water, trouble broke out unexpectedly in the adjoining district of Shahabad. For more than a fortnight large Hindu mobs wandered over a tract of some 2,000 square miles, attacking, burning, and pillaging Muslim villages and houses, retreating before the police through the flooded fields and re-forming for fresh outrages. Nearly 2,000 police and troops, infantry and cavalry, had to be poured into the district before the rising was subdued. 'The brutalities practised on the unfortunate victims of these riots were the theme of indignation meetings in many mosques of northern India, and collections were made in aid of the sufferers wherever there were Muhammadans.'[1] The punishment of the Hindu aggressors which followed was swift and stern. The bitter memories of 1917 left no room later for an anti-Government alliance between the Hindu and Muhammadan masses of Bihar.

Except for a savage outbreak at Katarpur (United Provinces) in 1918, there was a lull in communal strife for the next four years. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report,

[1] Sir Verney Lovett, *History of Indian Nationalist Movement* (1921), p. 150.

the measures adopted to deal with the revolutionary movement and the Punjab disturbances occupied the public mind. Muhammadans were full of apprehension regarding the fate of Turkey, and Mr. Gandhi seized this opportunity to forge an alliance with the pan-Islamic leaders of the Khilafat Committee and to enlist their fiery aid in his first non-co-operation campaign. With the progress of that campaign we are not here concerned. The alliance received a mortal blow when the Moplah rebellion broke out in the Malabar district of Madras in the autumn of 1921, and these savage fanatical Muslims of mixed Arab descent turned all their fury on their Hindu neighbours. 'Murders, forcible conversions, desecrations of temples, outrages upon women, pillage, arson and destruction were perpetrated freely, until troops could be assembled for the task of restoring order in a difficult and extensive tract of country. As might be expected, the barbarities practised by the Moplahs had immediate reactions on Hindu and Muslim relations throughout India.'[1]

By the middle of 1922 the alliance between the Hindu and Muhammadan extremists had completely broken down, the non-co-operation campaign had failed and the Khilafat grievance vanished when Turkey deposed the Khalifa and settled her affairs in her own way. The old religious dissensions between the two communities were now being stimulated by proselytizing activities. On the part of the Hindus there were two movements: one which sought to bring back to the Hindu fold converts to Islam and Christianity; and another, whose object was to foster militant Hinduism. The Muhammadans replied with counter-organizations, and the operations of these opposing movements did much to heat the communal atmosphere. The first grave outbreak of a new series

[1] *Indian Statutory Commission* (H.M.S.O., 1930), vol. iv, pt. i, p. 99.

occurred at Multan (Punjab) in September 1922 on the occasion of the Muharram festival, and the celebrations in 1923 were marked by serious collisions, of which the most formidable occurred at Saharanpur (United Provinces), where the casualties exceeded 300. The year 1924 had a still blacker record with 18 serious riots, in which 86 persons were killed and 776 wounded. The worst storm centre was Kohat in the Frontier Province, where terrible disturbances arose out of the publication of an anti-Islamic poem of Hindu authorship. The roll of two days' casualties amounted to 36 killed and 145 wounded: extensive looting took place in the bazaars, and house property valued at £70,000 was destroyed. The riots were followed by a temporary exodus from the town of the entire Hindu population. The Kohat tragedy sent a thrill of horror throughout India, and a conference attended by leading representatives of all creeds was held at Delhi in September 1924 to concert peace measures. There was some improvement in 1925, but it was short-lived, for all previous records were surpassed in 1926 with 36 serious riots and a casualty roll of close on 2,000. In this year Calcutta took the lead with disturbances which started over the old trouble of music before mosques and developed into an orgy of murderous attacks by hooligans of both camps. Before peace was finally restored 200 shops were looted, 12 sacred buildings were desecrated or destroyed, there were 150 cases of incendiary fire and 1,450 casualties, including 140 deaths.

In previous years religious disputes had been the chief causes of collision, but the tension had now become so great that the most trivial incidents sufficed to start trouble. The demon of unrest was abroad; the spirit of lawlessness had been aroused by the non-co-operation movement; and communal disorder had become the

dominant factor of Indian political life. In July 1926 the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, made a solemn and moving appeal in the name of religion to the leaders of both communities, calling upon them to work for peace and end 'the communal tension which was eating into the national life as a cancer'. His speech made a profound impression upon the whole of educated India, but it did not reach the ignorant multitude, which continued to be the prey of agitators and fanatics. After a short lull of a few months the mischief revived with unabated vigour, and the year 1927 was almost as black as its predecessor. Thirty-one serious riots occurred with a casualty roll exceeding 1,600. Lord Irwin made a renewed appeal for peace in August 1927. 'The whole landscape is overshadowed by the lowering clouds of communal tension.' Unity conferences were held in September and October, but, shortly after, attention was diverted even from communal strife by the announcement of the appointment of the Statutory (Simon) Commission. The Muhammadans generally held aloof from the organized boycott of the Commission, and became convinced that the time had come to unite in defence of their common interests. The compendious resolution of 1 January 1929, in which the Muslim All-Parties Conference set forth the minimum demands of the community, has been quoted at length in Chapter V.

Communal riots were much less frequent in 1928 than in the two previous years, but between February and May 1929 there occurred serious disturbances in Bombay City, which began with collisions between Hindu strikers and Pathan substitutes, and continued, as in Calcutta three years before, with murderous assaults on individuals and wholesale looting of shops by the criminal classes. Before the disorder finally subsided there had been over 1,100 casualties, including nearly 200 deaths. The significance

of these riots was that their proximate cause was economic rather than religious.

The Viceroy's announcement of 31 October 1929 regarding Dominion status and the Round Table Conference rallied moderate opinion throughout India, but did not prevent the extremists from launching their second campaign of civil disobedience in the spring of the following year. This disastrous war against authority widened the breach between Hindus and Muhammadans, for the latter resented the tyrannous interference with their normal activities exercised by the Congress agents. A temporary halt was called on 4 March 1931, but the ink was hardly dry on the Delhi agreement when the Cawnpore tragedy shocked the whole of India. In the course of an enforced closing of shops, in honour of a Hindu assassin, the Hindus and Muhammadans of Cawnpore came to blows. 'This developed into a riot of unprecedented violence and peculiar atrocity. . . . Murders, arson and looting were widespread for three days. . . . The death roll . . . was probably between four and five hundred—a large number of temples and mosques were desecrated or destroyed, and a very large number of houses were burnt and pillaged.'[1] In the spring of 1932 political tension between the Hindu and Muslim communities greatly increased throughout India. The Round Table Conference had failed to settle the communal issue, Congress had resumed its activities and all parties awaited with nervousness the communal award expected of Government. About the middle of May a petty quarrel between Muslim and Hindu youths started a conflagration in the much-troubled city of Bombay. The guerilla warfare which followed took the usual form of murderous assaults, pillage of shops, and incendiary fires. Before

[1] *Report of the Commission of Inquiry* (Cmd. 3851, 1931).

order was finally restored by the troops and the police, nearly 3,000 casualties, including over 200 deaths, had occurred. Competent observers held that the bitterness was greater than in 1929 and was marked by political rather than religious manifestations.

This brief record of communal conflicts, in which only the most prominent incidents have been mentioned, forms a dark page in Indian history. If it has been blacker during the past decade, the cause is doubtless to be found, partly in the unrest produced in the minds of the masses by the ceaseless agitation of these later years, and partly in the general uneasiness induced in all minds by the fear of impending changes in the constitutional structure. Two comments of a general nature may be made. The record would have been many times blacker if the areas of disturbance and the extent of the casualties had not been closely limited by the united efforts of the magistracy, the police, and the military. Throughout these troubles the conduct of the police and of the troops has won the highest praise. Few, if any, of the major conflicts have been brought under control without the aid of the military, and it is impossible to exaggerate the relief and confidence which the arrival and presence of troops has inspired in the attacked minority.

On the other hand, one must guard against the cumulative effect of a bare recital of the facts. To get the picture in proper perspective, one must stand back from the canvas and remember that the facts are culled from a subcontinent, from a population of 250 millions in British India living in half a million villages and some 1,600 towns and cities. The toll of human life from communal conflicts during the past sixty years has been less than the holocaust of a single massacre in the olden days.

The great masses of the rural population, whether Hindu or Muhammadan, are simple cultivators, who at all

normal times live in peace and amity. Their chief preoccupations are the timely arrival and seasonal distribution of the annual rains, the tillage of their fields, the gathering of their harvests, their dealings with their landlords and their money-lenders. Religious festivals are one of their few excitements. If these occasionally lead to strife and bloodshed, normal relations are resumed as soon as the lava flow of passion subsides. The urban masses are more prone to communal strife, because life is more complicated in the towns. Here political friction often stimulates religious antagonism; temples and mosques are closer together; there is more danger of collision in the narrow streets, and a larger admixture of the rowdy turbulent elements that love disorder for its own sake and for its opportunities. The educated classes of both communities, when their vision is not temporarily clouded by some communal issue, work harmoniously together in all walks of life. It may indeed be claimed with justice that they have been drawn together, not severed, by their century and a half of association under a common administration, which has given them the same laws, the same security of person and freedom of action, the same schools and universities, the same progressive civilization and the bond of a common speech.

The Communal Award

At the first session of the Round Table Conference most of the discussion circled round the two difficult subjects of federal structure and minority rights. Muslim delegates came prepared to demand as a minimum the articles of the 1929 resolution cited in Chapter V. These demands were formulated by way of defence against the feared domination of the Hindu majority in a British-India central Government. The acceptance of the All-India

federal principle doubtless blunted the edge of Muslim fears, but their delegates none the less firmly pressed their claims at both sessions of the Conference as conditions essential to the safe working of the new constitution.

In the Minorities Committee the two chief items of dispute were the methods of election and the proportions of representation to be accorded to the different communities in the provincial legislatures. On the former point Hindu delegates argued for joint electorates; the minorities stood out for separate communal constituencies. Much might be said on either side, but it would be useless to discuss here the two alternatives, for up to the close of the Conference none of the minorities, and least of all the Muhammadans, would hear of joint electorates, even with the reservation of seats or other suggested refinements, and it was impossible to proceed farther on a basis that appeared to be rejected by nearly half of British India.

The real crux lay in the second point. The Muslim claim was for the maintenance of their existing weighted representation in the six provinces in which they form a minority; and for the statutory guarantee of a majority in the two provinces of Bengal and the Punjab, where they number about 55 per cent. In the North-West Frontier Province, newly raised to the status of a Governor's province, and in Sind, which they expect to be severed from Bombay, they largely preponderate and are willing to make reasonable concessions to the Hindu minority. The conflict raged over the cases of Bengal and the Punjab, for weighted representation in the other provinces is not a vital issue. The Bengal difficulty might have been amicably settled, but the Punjab case was complicated by an insistent claim of the Sikhs for representation largely in excess of their proportionate numbers, a claim which could not be conceded without either

destroying the Muslim majority or reducing the Hindu minority representation to an unfair extent. Repeated efforts were made by private negotiation to secure agreement, and these were backed by powerful appeals from the Prime Minister, who constantly urged that the settlement of this important question was holding up the whole work of the Conference and that no arrangement could be satisfactory which was not found by mutual agreement. Eventually, however, the negotiations failed, and not all the influence of Mr. Gandhi at the second session brought the disputants nearer to agreement. At the close of the session on the 1st of December 1931, the Prime Minister expressed the hope that a solution by mutual consent might still be found after the delegates returned to India, but he warned them that, failing this, Government must themselves frame a provisional scheme which would enable the work of constitution building to proceed.

In the event, no solution was found in India and Government were obliged to formulate their provisional scheme in August 1932. The award was purposely confined to the two basic questions of methods of election and proportions of representation in the provincial legislatures. It maintained the principle of separate communal electorates for Muhammadans, Sikhs, Indian Christians (in selected areas), Anglo-Indians, and Europeans, but this arrangement might be revised by consent after ten years. All others (mainly Hindu) were entitled to vote in general constituencies, but the depressed classes were to have in addition for a maximum of twenty years the right to vote in special constituencies for a specified number of reserved seats—an arrangement subsequently modified by agreement with Hindu political leaders, as explained in Chapter XVI. Seats were reserved for women, labour, commerce and industry, mining and planting, landholders

and universities, with special arrangements for election. Seats were also reserved for Marathas in Bombay and for representatives of 'backward areas' (aboriginal tribes). The award altogether covered 1,513 seats spread over nine provincial legislatures.

In view of the Conference discussions, the distribution of seats in Bengal and in the Punjab was of outstanding importance. In both provinces the Muhammadans received about 7 per cent. short of their numerical superiority ($47\frac{1}{2}$ against 55 per cent. in Bengal and 49 against 56 in the Punjab). The Sikhs of the Punjab were awarded 18·3 per cent. of the seats, against a population percentage of 13 and a communal claim which ranged from 24 to 30 per cent. The proposals in both provinces seemed to give the Muhammadans the hope of a working majority based on the goodwill of the other communities.

'The scheme', as the Prime Minister wrote at the time, 'is a fair and honest attempt to hold the balance between conflicting claims', and he appealed to all concerned to accept it as an endeavour, when they themselves had failed, to remove a serious obstacle from the path of constitutional advance. It was provisional in the sense that Government were prepared to accept any better scheme to which all the parties concerned might later give their full concurrence, but they made it clear that they would not listen to any sectional representations.

Indian public men often refer with quite unnecessary shame to the necessity for communal safeguards under the new constitution. Mr. Gandhi has referred to it as a 'humiliation'. But the problem of minority safeguards is not peculiar to India. It arose acutely in Canada, as between the French and British settlers, and was solved by the British North American Act (1867), which cannot be amended without the consent of the British Parliament.

In south-eastern Europe the existence of two or more nationalities in one State is the rule rather than the exception, and it was this fact which proved the impracticability of the doctrine of 'self-determination', when the statesmen of the world attempted to rearrange frontiers at the end of the Great War. In certain regions Germans and Poles, Hungarians and Rumanians, Czechs and Germans are so intricately mingled that no frontiers, however drawn, could separate them. The adequate protection of minorities against unfair treatment by the majority is now recognized to be a matter of international concern. General rules for securing the rights of minorities are becoming part of the international law of Europe and are embodied in the constitutions of at least ten States.

In many respects, however, the Indian communal problem stands alone and has no parallel elsewhere. The various communities have lived together for many generations. Their fundamental rights have been declared in Royal Proclamations on several historic occasions during the last century, and are taken for granted. But now that the British Government have declared their intention of conferring upon India a large measure of responsible self-government the struggle of the various communities is for political power; for adequate representation in the public services, in the legislatures, in local bodies and in the provincial and central executives. As between the two principal communities in India the situation is clear. In Sind, Baluchistan, the North-West Frontier Province and the Northern Punjab the Muhammadans constitute the vast majority of the population. In the rest of the sub-continent the members of the two great religions are more intermixed, and, except in Bengal, the Muhammadans are in a minority. These two factors must be dominant in any distribution of political power between the two communities.

Chapter VII

MINORITY COMMUNITIES

I. THE SIKHS

By SIR PATRICK FAGAN, K.C.I.E., C.S.I.

[Sir Patrick Fagan served in the Punjab as a member of the Indian Civil Service from 1887 to 1922. As Settlement Officer and District Officer, and as Commissioner of the Jullundur Division, he served in areas where the Sikh population predominates, and was in close touch with them and with their opinions and needs.]

THE Sikhs are neither a race, nor a nationality, nor a caste, but primarily the followers of a religion. They form a community which is of importance by reason of traditional prestige derived from its religious and political history rather than from its numbers. Its total strength in the whole of India at the 1931 census was 4,306,000. Of these, three millions live in the British province of the Punjab and over a million in the Indian States geographically associated with that province. The community forms about one-seventh of the total population of the British Punjab and the adjacent States combined.

For the due appreciation of its present political position some consideration—necessarily very summary—of its history is indispensable. Shortly, the history is one of a religious origin with subsequent quietistic religious development, followed, under the stress of Muslim hostility and persecution, by the growth of a militant spirit, culminating at the end of the seventeenth century in the establishment of a religio-military organization, the Sikh *Khalsa* or Brotherhood, which ultimately, under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, won political domination over the entire tract laying between the river Sutlej and the north-western frontier of India, including Kashmir.

Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was born in the Punjab in A.D. 1469. A Hindu of humble origin, his natural religious tendencies were developed by extensive travel and by contact with the Vedantism of southern India as well as with the mystical side of Islam. He founded no definitely new religion or religious organization, but was the critic and reformer of existing religions. His teaching, which was entirely divorced from politics, embodied a revulsion from the prevailing Brahminism. He rejected caste, Brahmin usages, and the supremacy of the Brahmin; he prohibited idolatry and pilgrimages, but accepted the doctrine of transmigration. His followers were termed Sikhs, or disciples. He died in 1539 and was succeeded in the leadership of his community during the next two centuries by a line of nine gurus, or spiritual directors. During that period a spirit of militancy developed in the Sikh community, partly the effect and partly the cause of severe persecution by the Muhammadan Mogul rulers of India. The martyrdom at Delhi of the ninth guru, Tegh Bahadur, was its culmination. He was succeeded by his son Gobind Singh, the last and the most famous of the gurus. By the time of his death in 1708 he had transformed his followers into a military community; but except in their pacific aspects he did not supersede the doctrine and theology of Nanak. His chief claim to reverence among Sikhs is the foundation of the Sikh Khalsa (the Church or Body of the Elect), which he formally established at the end of the seventeenth century, its members being given the designation of Singh (or Lion). He instituted for the body a form of ritual including a rite which is analogous to baptism, and a communal meal of consecrated food. The Sikh community possesses also a body of holy scripture, of which the most important work is the *Adi Granth*, compiled by the fifth guru at the end of the sixteenth century and containing

compositions by Nanak and his successors as well as by certain Hindu and Muhammadan Saints. A supplementary Granth contains utterances of Guru Gobind Singh. The central shrine of the Sikh community is the Golden Temple at Amritsar, the second largest city in the Punjab and the head-quarters of the faith.

From 1708 up to the British annexation of the Punjab in 1849 the history of the Khalsa is the history of north-western India, and that is a history of war and bloodshed. Under the stress of repeated invasions from Afghanistan, and amid a perennial triangular struggle between the invaders, the vigorous and aggressive Sikh, and the feeble and disorganized forces of the Mogul, the control of the latter over the Punjab practically terminated in 1755, while the military and political power of the Khalsa grew. The grip of the Afghan was relaxed after 1767, and the Sikhs, in the form of a loose confederacy of more or less localized associations, known as *misls*, with Amritsar as their centre, proceeded to divide the province on both sides of the Sutlej into spheres of influence for the levy of tribute, for the general purposes of rapine and loot, and in order to provide estates for their leaders.

Between 1798 and 1810 Ranjit Singh, born in 1780 and a member of a rural family of some position and influence, succeeded in securing political ascendancy over all the territories which had been appropriated by the associations to the north of the Sutlej. His threatened advance to the south of that river was very firmly but peaceably foiled by the British Government in the treaty of Amritsar, concluded in 1809. Ranjit Singh recouped himself by conquering the remainder of the Punjab, including the north-western frontier and Kashmir. All of this he had acquired by 1820 by means of a regular army organized and disciplined on European lines. The government of his

dominions was of a primitive type, being confined for the most part to the collection of revenue and the maintenance of some degree of law and order, and dependent for its results on the efficiency of local governors.

On the Maharaja's death in 1839 chaos and dissolution once more rapidly supervened, culminating in 1845 in the invasion of British territory by the Khalsa army. It was decisively repulsed after several hard-fought battles, and a Sikh regency under British guidance and protection was set up on behalf of the late Maharaja's minor heir. But a régime of comparative law and order did not commend itself to the Khalsa leaders. Once again they resorted to the arbitrament of arms and the second Sikh War, a strenuous struggle bravely fought by both sides, resulted in 1849 in the definite annexation by Britain of the Punjab up to the present north-western frontier.

In the great Mutiny of 1857 Sikh troops recruited in the recently conquered provinces rendered memorable service in helping to retain India for the Crown, thus testifying to their rapidly acquired appreciation of the benefits of British rule. In the subsequent era of peaceful progress, administrative and economic, the militant spirit of the Khalsa declined in vitality, the tenets of Nanak displacing to some extent the more strenuous prescriptions of Gobind Singh, though the rule which required all Sikh recruits to the Indian Army to take the baptismal rite helped to preserve Sikhism of the Khalsa type. But, since the opening of the present century, increasing contact with western culture and the process of self-criticism which it has instigated in the Sikh community, no less than in India generally, have led to a revival of communal consciousness and to a growing recognition of communal interests. There has developed a Neo-Sikhism which strives to combine acceptance of and reverence for Khalsa traditions with a more modern

outlook on current problems, social, political, and educational; but which, as a cult of the community, is dominated by an almost aggressive determination to ensure the full preservation, if not indeed the provincial ascendancy of itself and of its interests, and to secure for it a position in the process of Indian evolution worthy of its political and religious history.

The early years of the century saw the development of an elective council—the Chief Khalsa Dewan—for the general direction of the religious and educational concerns of the community and for the protection of its interests. To it were affiliated similar local committees in the large towns, and associations in rural areas; but during the troubles of recent years—to be noticed later—much of its influence and authority has been appropriated by the more extreme politicians of the Neo-Sikh school. The chief educational institution of the community is the Khalsa College at Amritsar: it maintains other colleges as well as some four hundred schools. It has also promoted and secured provincial legislation in matters directly concerning its interests; such as an Act passed in 1909 to legitimize a special form of Sikh marriage, an Act for the prevention of the use of tobacco among juvenile Sikhs, and the Sikh Shrines Act passed in 1925.

The bulk of the Sikh community is to be found among the agricultural tribes of the Punjab, though certain urban trading and professional classes and artisans form important elements. The Sikh peasant is generally a sturdy, industrious, and successful cultivator, somewhat slow-witted, but withal shrewd and acquisitive and not without enterprise. He makes an excellent soldier and he furnished a substantial proportion of the great host of recruits which the Punjab provided in the Great War; but under a lax régime or in a novel social environment he is apt to lose

his bearings and his self-control. The other classes are generally of a higher grade of intelligence and mental ability and have to some extent been caught up into existing currents of Indian political thought and aspiration, while the peasants have little taste for preoccupations of this nature.

In the recent era of development, the reform of the religious institutions of the community has not unnaturally assumed importance among devout Sikhs untouched by ardent political aspirations. Such institutions are generally of a monastic type and attached to a shrine, commemorative of some notable incident in the life of a guru, or containing his ashes or those of some other famous religious personage. The *mahants* or abbots of these institutions are often members of an order of celibates which dates from the time of Nanak and which adheres to his tenets rather than to the principles of Gobind Singh. Their precise legal position was a matter of much intricacy; and it was no doubt true that, as in the rest of India as well as in other countries, in many but by no means in all cases they were guilty of misconduct of various kinds, including misapplication of monastic property and funds. At the end of 1920 a communal committee for the management of the sacred shrines was set up and soon acquired increasing influence. But this development, laudable enough in itself, was shortly captured by the more extreme politically-minded members of the Sikh community, chiefly of the urban classes, and exploited for political purposes in conjunction with the political agitation then in progress in other parts of India. They quickly saw that such a movement, innocuous in itself, might easily be converted into a powerful instrument for subversive agitation, if only an element of lawless violence could be introduced by appeals to the religious sentiment and traditions of an impulsive community,

while the funds of the institutions would be useful for political objects. The committee accordingly organized the Akalis, a militant puritan sect of the Sikhs and the traditional successors of the personal bodyguard of Guru Gobind Singh, and encouraged recruitment to their ranks, using them as a militia for the execution of its orders. Large bodies of these men proceeded to occupy the monasteries, often by forcible seizure and ejectment of the managers. Propaganda, in which religious and political matter was craftily mingled with suggestions that the Government was hostile to the Sikh religion, was extensively carried on. The Government, while taking measures, not uniformly successful, to cope with actual lawlessness, was wholly conciliatory in its attitude towards monastic reform. Efforts made in 1921 to introduce legislation satisfactory to genuine reformers were rendered ineffectual by the attitude of the committee, which was much influenced by the non-co-operation movement, then prevalent in India. In 1922 the action of the Akalis threatened a reign of terror in parts of the Punjab, but the movement of troops into the disturbed areas combined with other vigorous measures effected some degree of pacification. Early in 1923, in an endeavour to conciliate the Shrines Committee, prisoners arrested for defiance of the police were released, and later in the same year legislation dealing with the shrines was passed in the provincial legislature by a majority of official and Muhammadan votes against the combined opposition of Sikh and Hindu members. This did little to allay trouble, which continued throughout 1923 and into 1924. In October 1923 the committee was declared an illegal association and its members arrested, but it was reconstituted in another form and its activities continued.

In the latter part of 1924, however, more sober views began to assert themselves in the Sikh community and the

pernicious influence of the Shrines Committee waned, with a consequent cessation of lawlessness. A Bill dealing with the whole question of the shrines, introduced in the provincial legislature by a private member after lengthy negotiation, was passed in July 1925, and was shortly afterwards implemented by the central Indian legislature. By this Act all Sikh religious institutions were brought under the control of the Sikh community through the agency of local congregational representatives; their managers were deprived of permanent tenure of their offices, the due application of monastic endowments was ensured, and the proper maintenance and audit of accounts prescribed.

The substantial success thus secured by the shrines agitation has served to foster communal ambition and the desire for communal advance, and, so far as may be, ascendancy. The leaders of the Sikh community have during the last few years taken a vigorous part in the discussion of schemes of constitutional reform and have advanced claims to elective representation proportionate to its own estimate of its political and historical importance rather than to its numerical strength. In the constitution introduced in 1921 separate communal representation was conceded to Sikhs as to Muhammadans. Out of a total of 71 elective seats in the provincial Legislative Council, 12 (or 17 per cent.) were allotted to Sikh, as compared with 32 (or 45 per cent.) to Muhammadan constituencies, the corresponding proportion to the total provincial population for the two communities being 11 and 55 respectively. Before the Simon Commission in 1929 representatives of the Sikh community claimed 30 per cent. of the elective seats in the provincial council, and the claim has since been repeated. A demand was also made that one-third of the seats in the future ministerial cabinet of the province should be reserved for Sikhs, a proportion

which has in fact been continuously observed among the ministers who have been in office since 1921, while, it may be noted here, a Sikh gentleman has at the present time a seat in the Council of the Secretary of State. Under the communal decision promulgated in August 1932 by the British Government, out of 175 proposed elective seats in the Punjab legislature, 32 (or 18 per cent.) have been allocated to Sikh and 86 (or 49 per cent.) to Muhammadan constituencies. In the case of the Sikhs this award is by no means a grudging recognition of claims which, though based on reasonable grounds, have been put forward in a somewhat exaggerated form. It may be hoped that mature consideration will lead the community to accept it as such.

II. THE DEPRESSED CLASSES

By J. CHARTRES MOLONY, M.A., I.C.S., RETD.

[Mr. Molony as a member of the Indian Civil Service served from 1901 to 1926 in the Madras Presidency, where the problem of the depressed classes is acute, and where his work gave him many opportunities of studying the conditions of those classes. His *Madras Census Report for 1911* and his *Book of South India* (Methuen, 1926) deal in some measure with the problem as it exists in south India.]

For the ordinary English reader the words 'depressed classes' may be misleading. As applied to India the term 'depressed classes' has a specific connotation: it connotes a class standing outside Hindu society but in a definite relation to it, and, in theory at least, denied by Hinduism that respect which might seem to be the elementary right of every human being. This class was formerly known as 'pariah', 'outcaste', 'untouchable'.

Among the specific disabilities of the outcaste class are these. An outcaste must quit the public way at the approach of a caste Hindu: his touch, contiguity, shadow

are deemed to be polluting. He may not draw water from a well used by caste Hindus. He may not send his children to a school attended by the children of caste Hindus. He may not worship in the temples of caste Hindus.

The depressed classes are to be found throughout India. The final report of the census of India for 1931 is not yet (October 1932) available, but the Statutory Commission in 1930 estimated the number of the 'outcastes', exclusive of aboriginals definitely outside the Hindu fold, at 43½ millions, and divided them thus between the provinces: United Provinces, 12 millions; Bengal, 11½ millions; Madras, 6½ millions; Bihar and Orissa, 5 millions; Central Provinces, over 3 millions; Punjab, nearly 3 millions; Bombay, 1½ millions; and Assam, 1 million. The estimates of provincial superintendents of the 1931 census disclose some curious variations: in the United Provinces the number has risen to nearly 13 millions, in Bihar and Orissa it has fallen to less than 4 millions. The discrepancies possibly may be accounted for by the fact that it is no more easy to define precisely an 'outcaste' than it is to define precisely a 'Hindu'; and now that the political representation of the depressed classes has become a political issue, suggestions are not wanting that figures can be adjusted to fit the arguments of one side or the other. For practical purposes it is sufficient to know that such persons do exist in great numbers, and that a political issue of to-day is what provision to safeguard their interests should or can be made in any future constitution.

To arrive at a proper understanding of the problem it is necessary to consider dispassionately the origin, supposed and real, of the depressed classes, the practical incidence to-day of their specific disabilities, and the reason for their ill-treatment and acquiescence in ill-treatment throughout a very long period of time.

According to orthodox Hindu thought, mankind was divided into the following classes: (1) Brahmins, or priests; (2) Kshattriyas, or warriors; (3) Vaisyas, or traders; (4) Sudras, or artisans. Outside these classes were placed the Pariahs, persons reaping the bitter fruits of sin in past incarnations, and consequently foul in their manner of life and doomed to degrading occupations. To accept literally this preordained Divine purpose is not more easy than it is to accept literally the cosmogony of Genesis. But the classification, especially as regards the Pariahs, is not a bad practical description of many human societies at other times and in other parts of the world. The position of the Pariah in modern India has some resemblance to that of the Jew in medieval Europe. The material misery of the Pariah to-day is probably not much deeper than the material misery of the English miner and factory worker at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In Europe the Jew has never been able to escape (even if he so desired) from his race; but creed is no longer accounted a disadvantage to any one, and it is now possible for an individual to change freely and finally his economic and social status. In India to-day nothing forbids a Brahmin to become a working jeweller, a caste goldsmith to become a Government clerk. But, as yet, neither can divest himself of his original caste or alter his essential status in Hinduism. A Pariah, even in the face of heredity and environment, may acquire wealth, education, influence, but he cannot rid himself of the specific disadvantages of his class.

The real origin of the depressed classes is suggested by their numbers: in their several localities they may represent original peoples submerged but not obliterated by successive invasions. It is noteworthy that in Madras the Tamil Pariahs have begun to style themselves Adi-

Dravidas, or 'Original Dravidians'. Such persons presumably were rude in their habits, of a low standard of intelligence, attached to the soil and therefore stationary and easily accessible. For less accessible and more migratory Indian tribes, although they may stand on no higher plane of morality and refinement, have ordinarily escaped the stigma of pariahdom. The mobile Kuravan, who as the human embodiment of 'the distempered instinct of the jackdaw' is undoubtedly somewhat of a pest to society, has his recognized place within the Hindu social hierarchy.

Such subdued and submissive people were reduced by their conquerors to a very servile status. They became hewers of wood (the complementary 'drawers of water' would be curiously inappropriate), earth-grimed delvers in the fields. Bit by bit were assigned to them the unpleasant duties which they discharge to-day. They became the sweepers and scavengers of the community, the flayers of dead animals. Disgust at unpleasant tasks may have hardened into contempt for persons forced, and in course of time willing, to perform them.

Anger at Hindu oppression and scorn of Pariah servility are natural to the European. But ere he gives expression to either, the European should remember that in regard to certain things the mentality of India is wholly different from that of Europe. Save in a few special localities (for example, in Malabar) 'untouchability' is not now (1932) a matter of much practical moment. A Brahmin will not accept a Pariah as an inmate or servant in his house; but in the market-place he does not trouble himself about the Pariah's proximity. Refusal of water to the thirsty is abhorrent to European ideas. But to water and to food the Indian attaches a peculiar significance. Few Indians are willing to permit the touching of their food by a member of a caste or creed which they deem inferior to

their own. And the restriction is commonly applied, so far as may be, to water. A Mala and a Madiga alike are Pariahs, but neither will allow the other to draw water from his well.

In Europe, although no quasi-theological law forbids it, the working cobbler does not ordinarily inhabit the same street as the priest or lawyer; the convention which is tacit in Europe is in India explicit and enforced. On the dry plains refusal of house-sites within caste limits to Pariahs does not work particular hardship: there is ample space for all. In irrigated tracts, where in fields artificially lowered 'islands' are left to serve as labourers' house-sites, this refusal can, however, be an instrument of economic tyranny; the Pariah, if he will not accept the landowner's terms, is hard put to it to find a place whereon to lay his head.

The objection of the caste Hindu to the presence of Pariah children in 'public' schools is largely a manifestation of the feeling which in most countries leads the 'gentleman' to forbid his children association with the children of the petty tradesman, the artisan, the domestic servant. In India the refusal is perhaps the more unjustifiable, inasmuch as most Indian schools are subsidized from public funds. In England the same feeling finds expression in the practical surrender of the Board Schools by the 'upper' to the 'lower' classes. France has toyed with the idea of one school compulsory for all (*l'école unique*) but has not yet ventured to enforce it. In present-day India the educational regulations of all provinces provide for the admission of children of the depressed classes to the common village school.

As to the exclusion of the depressed classes from Hindu temples, no exact parallel can be found in other religions; but if regard be held to the Hindu conception of the

position of the depressed classes in the universe, it is both logical and intelligible.

In short, the social habits, the social regulations of a nation, are the expression of a national mentality, and as such are not to be condemned off-hand and utterly by a foreigner. But to attenuate the degree of oppression is not to justify oppression; still less is it to explain why oppression is continuingly practised by the caste Hindu and continuingly permitted by the Pariah. The explanation may be found in a train of thought peculiar to India. The Indian mind has never attached importance to the individual. Sankaracharya, the subtlest of Indian metaphysicians, endeavoured to abnegate the concept of personality; in the Hindu religion there is no expectation or desire of a conscious individual immortality. God's world, as it exists, with its good and evil, its happiness and misery, must be accepted; that a change is possible, that a change might be for the benefit and to the liking of some, is not a reason why a change should be made. The regulations of Hinduism are often as cruel to the individual Brahmin as to the mass of the depressed classes.

Unquestionably during the last hundred years, even within the last twenty years, the position of the depressed classes has been sensibly ameliorated. The fact that their political representation is a practical question of to-day proves the assertion. A hundred years ago, fifty years ago, to speak of political representation for the depressed classes would have been akin to speaking of political representation for the cats and dogs. The chief agencies of improvement have been Christian missionary societies, some non-Christian philanthropic agencies, and the alien (British) Government of India.

It is among the depressed classes that the Christian missionary finds his readiest converts; in theological

argument the educated Hindu is a genuinely formidable opponent, and one not easy to confound or convince. It has been charged against the Christian missionary that he bribes the outcaste. He certainly offers, perhaps indirectly, to the outcaste the hope of a better material life. This is right, and in nowise blameworthy; it is silly to offer a man the stone of theology while his stomach craves for bread. And, humanly speaking, it is easier to be 'good' in comfort than in misery. It is a proof of the strength of Hindu prejudice that three hundred years ago Robert di Nobili (d. 1656), one of the earliest and greatest missionaries of Christianity to India, found himself obliged to recognize explicitly within Christianity the degradation of the Pariah. It is a proof of a slow but steady liberalization of Indian thought that the missionary of to-day, although he cannot force the Brahmin to accept the Pariah as a social equal, can explicitly refuse to admit that in the sight of the Christian God the Pariah is inferior to the Brahmin.

The British Government of India could not cut directly across the line of Hindu prejudice. It certainly would have been impolitic, it might have been morally wrong, for that Government to attempt a sudden and compulsory removal of outcaste disabilities. But where wells for the depressed classes did not exist, the Government provided them; for the depressed classes the Government created special schools; by judicious reservation and grant of land it endeavoured to raise them from economic slavery. Free emigration has been for the depressed classes a powerful weapon of defence against the tyranny of the caste landlord; the political agitation over the disabilities of the Indian emigrant in the Straits Settlements, Ceylon, South Africa, springs quite as much from a desire for abundant and cheap outcaste labour as from a sensitiveness to

Indian dignity. And steadily the Government has opened the gate of public employment wider and yet more wide to the depressed classes. For many years an outcaste menial in a Government office has attracted no comment or objection from caste Hindus; very recently from menial employment the outcaste has begun to make his way to positions of trust and authority.

The political importance of the depressed classes is recognized by the fact that among the fourteen non-official members nominated by the Governor-General in the central Legislative Assembly room was found for one representative of the depressed classes. For the provincial legislatures, classes which in the opinion of the Governor are 'depressed' have been represented by four nominations in the Central Provinces, two in Bombay, two in Bihar, and one each in Bengal and in the United Provinces. In Madras ten members were nominated to represent nine specified depressed communities. At the Round Table Conferences of 1930 and 1931 two representatives of the depressed classes sat as members of the British India delegation. The Statutory Commission of 1930 recommended a reservation of seats in legislatures for the depressed classes to the extent of three-quarters of their proportion to the total population. The Franchise Committee of 1932 proposed an electorate of not less than 10 per cent. of their population strength. Some of the qualifications proposed by the Franchise Committee may seem fanciful or artificial; but the principle that the depressed classes shall definitely be recognized and represented was established. In the communal award of His Majesty's Government of August 1932, seventy-one special seats in seven out of the nine provincial legislatures were allotted for twenty years to the depressed classes; moreover, they were to be allowed to vote in general

constituencies as well as in their own special constituencies.[1]

Whether the depressed classes will ever be received on an equal footing by Hindu society no man can say. There may be some differences too deep for reconciliation. And it is not always easy to say on which side irreconcilability is strongest.

III. THE BRITISH COMMERCIAL COMMUNITY

By SIR HUBERT CARR

[Sir Hubert Carr was for many years one of the leading business men in Calcutta and eastern India, and was President of the European Association of India from 1922 to 1925. He was the chief representative of the interests of European Commerce at the two Round Table Conferences of 1930–1, and is again a delegate in 1932.]

INTEREST in politics is a plant of comparatively recent growth in India. Fertile if not forcing conditions are to be found in most educated Indian communities, and it has spread with the engulfing luxuriance of tropical vegetation. The environment of the British community has not, however, been so kindly, and it has been due to a few public-spirited members in each quickly following generation, and to the pressure of events, that the political position is as strong as it is to-day. Even during the past few critical years, the necessity for adequate political representation has been so incompletely realized by many of those whose interests are vitally affected by political developments that it cannot yet be said that all concerned take a fair share in carrying the political burden.

[1] The intervention of Mr. Gandhi in September 1932 on the subject of these special constituencies and the subsequent agreement between certain political leaders among the caste Hindus and the depressed classes, whereby the depressed classes relinquished the 71 special seats allotted to them in return for the reservation of 148 seats in the general (overwhelmingly Hindu) constituencies, are described later in Chapter XVI.

Probably the chief reason for this indifference has been that, until lately, the British in India had men of their own race in charge of the administration, who with few exceptions governed the country efficiently and justly, in a manner which left non-officials free to pursue their own vocations. Moreover, in 1833, when the Governor-General of India in Council in Bengal became the Governor-General of India in Council, a connexion was *ipso facto* created between the Government of India and non-official Europeans which continued through the succeeding seventy years during which Government made its head-quarters in Calcutta—the largest British colony in India. For this reason, when legislation or the administration interfered unfairly with British interests, appeal to a member of the Governor-General's Executive Council was as a rule sufficient to get an injustice corrected, an inequity removed, or to secure legitimate facilities for opening up the country to commerce and industry.

This informal contact with Government was obviously not suited to general application, and educated Indian opinion had been demanding consideration for some time when the wisdom of associating non-officials with the administration was recognized in the Act of 1861, which allowed for twelve additional members of Council, of whom six were to be non-officials. No regular representation of the British community followed, however, until a much later date. With the development of British commercial interests, occasions for consultation with Government and for special labour legislation became more frequent, and the advantage of having mercantile representatives on the Governor-General's Council was indicated in a dispatch to the Secretary of State in 1888, when the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, recommended the inclusion of the British mercantile community among

those to be represented on the enlarged councils. As a result the Government of India Act of 1892 reserved a seat on the Viceroy's Council among the ten non-officials to be included for a member who was to be recommended by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. When the maximum of sixteen additional members was raised by the Act of 1909 to sixty members, both Bengal and Bombay had their mercantile representatives on the Council.

This association of members of the British community with Government generally provided an adequate means of political representation, while the character and standing of the representatives were such as to ensure that the Government obtained all necessary advice on commercial and industrial requirements. Moreover, the relationship was admirably suited to the conditions of the community, which has no leisured class and but very few men of ripe experience free to give their attention to politics; for it is composed of men who are closely employed in their various vocations until the time comes for their retirement from residence in the East.

So far there had been little in the system of government to call forth any political interest from the community generally, but this politically peaceful condition was not to continue; for the advent of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, with the subsequent rapid democratization of the Government of India, forced on the British community the vital necessity for playing an active part in politics, if it was to maintain its position in the country and to have any influence in the Indian legislatures. Instead of two members for the Viceroy's Council, it became necessary to send twelve, and later thirteen members to the central government, while provincial governments made calls for forty-six representatives.

This expansion of political work has tended to remove

the centre of political activities from the Chambers of Commerce, with which politics have never been in favour, except so far as the conduct of business has necessitated political action, for they rightly wish to concentrate their energies on their own particular interests. Consequently, although political influence largely remains with the Chambers, its expression generally rests with the European Association and its branches throughout India.

The European Association was organized in Calcutta in 1883 under the presidency of a well-known merchant, J. J. Keswick. At that time British opinion in India was very disturbed by the risks likely to arise in country districts from the provisions of the Ilbert Bill, the genesis of which is set forth in Chapter II. Hence it sought some special and permanent channel of expression. Like the Indian National Congress, which took shape two years later, both bodies have grown principally political; but, while Congress fixed its course politically within its first few years, it was not until 1920—some seven years after Dudley Myers, another member of the Calcutta commercial community, with true foresight of his countrymen's needs, had laboured successfully to put the Association squarely on an All-India basis—that the European Association began its rapid political growth.

The political organization of the community was greatly encouraged during the viceroyalty of Lord Reading, who saw the necessity of its taking its proper place in public life and assisting the establishment of ultimate self-government in India. The scattered and fluctuating nature of the community made organization no easy matter to bring about or to maintain, but with the advent of the reforms members came forward in sufficient numbers to take their places in the various legislatures.

The small bands of European non-official legislators at

Delhi and in the provinces lent their whole influence to the preservation of the constitutional machine during the early years of the reforms, in spite of the efforts by many nationalist politicians to render it unworkable. Because of this general policy of supporting Government and of the sympathy they naturally have with the outlook of men in the administration who have been brought up with the same ideals, they have been dubbed, by a section of Indian opinion, a part of the official *bloc*. Nevertheless, the records of the legislatures emphatically contradict this view; for the European in the legislatures retains a consistently independent position, which on occasion leads him into direct opposition to Government.

The political outlook of the British community is still somewhat fluid, and may be described as a mixture of cautious liberalism, induced by a sympathetic understanding of Indian aspirations and the force of circumstances, with strongly conservative tendencies arising from practical experience of India and its peoples. This view is perhaps natural in view of the fact that the British non-official has, in the past, been strongly opposed to the development of Home Rule for India, on the democratic lines adopted by Parliament, holding that it is wholly unsuited to Indian requirements. Moreover, he is quite convinced that forward constitutional moves of the nature at present contemplated will mean deterioration in the administration during an indefinite period while the reformed governments are building up their staffs and gaining experience of the immense task of governing India under modern conditions. This outlook is not the outcome of racial prejudice or lack of sympathy with Indian nationalist aims, but is founded on intimate acquaintance with conditions in town and country, although it probably lacks the influence of free contact with Indian professional classes.

A great factor in deciding the present political colour of the community has been *The Statesman*. This newspaper, published at the centre of European non-official influence in India, has maintained a standard of sound political views which, in spite of the unpopularity of pioneer ideas, won through and has largely contributed to the liberalism of the British outlook. *The Statesman* has led, rather than conformed to, the opinions of the British community. Proof of its influence is found in the widespread nature of its circulation, a proof which finds corroboration in the history of *The Times of India* published in Bombay, which has also shared in the prosperity not experienced by some of the organs of more fixedly conservative views.

Prior to 1920, and in the early legislatures after that date, the British political attitude was chiefly decided by the legislative representatives. The community, although handicapped by the want of practical political experience, was fortunate in having the services of several men of wide sympathy and sound sense. Among them Sir Campbell Rhodes, who represented his countrymen in the Legislative Assembly from 1921 to 1925, made a lasting contribution to the status of the British contingent by his policy of consistent support for ordered progress, by friendly co-operation, and by his powers of sound criticism. Another member who did much to bring home to his countrymen the necessity for the mercantile community to keep in touch with the political position was Sir Walter Willson, who represented the Associated Chambers of Commerce (a British body) in the Assembly over the same period.

The connexion between the British members of the legislatures and the European Association has continued to be close; and nowadays the constitutional question is engaging the best minds of the community among its

younger, as well as among its more experienced, members. It is a good omen for the future that, in spite of the diversity of political creeds with regard to politics in Britain which must obtain in a community such as the British in India, the general line of political action has been adopted by the community with remarkable unanimity.

The influence of the British community in the legislatures is, and is likely to remain, in no small degree a question of personality, and it is much strengthened by the friendly relationship which exists between individuals of the two races, regardless of political opinions, and constitutes an invaluable asset both to India and to Britain. Further, the British non-official members take an active interest, not merely in measures directly affecting their own community, but also in all legislation other than that of a purely religious or social character. These activities bring them into close contact with their Indian fellow-members.

The British members are never likely to be able to exert great influence by voting strength, and although the reception accorded them is universally friendly in the legislatures, it is possible that the psychological effect of a large *bloc* of Englishmen would be an entire revulsion of feeling. The strongly communal outlook of many Indians in public life often makes it difficult for British members to maintain that unprejudiced attitude to all communities without which their influence would in large measure disappear. British action, free from party ties, is governed by the merits of the point at issue, but it is often the communal view which controls the Indian politician. Consequently wherever British sympathies may lie and because their judgement of the case may lead them into lobbies opposed to their friends, any but *ad hoc* political alliances would be disastrous to the British position.

In the future, when the official *bloc* is removed, non-

official influence is likely to have larger scope, but it may be more difficult to preserve both independence and influence, and the part to be played by those who have been born and bred under the conditions which India has set out to adopt will be no easy one.

In referring to the services of Englishmen in the legislatures the Indian Statutory Commission made the following remark:

'We have not heard sectional bias attributed . . . to the non-official European members. Their presence in the legislatures has been welcomed by Indians of all communities. Whether professedly representing the European community of a province, or a chamber of commerce, or other predominantly European body or interest—the difference between the two modes of representation is scarcely reflected in the members returned—they have been distinguished in the legislatures by their public spirit, sympathy, and width of outlook.[1]

If the British legislators of the future can earn similar favourable comments on their work and methods, their community will be fortunate and India will be strengthened for the difficult task ahead.

IV. THE ANGLO-INDIANS

By SIR CAMPBELL RHODES, C.B.E.

[Sir Campbell Rhodes was for many years a prominent figure in the business world of Calcutta, being President of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India and Ceylon in 1922, and taking a leading part in many Indian and Anglo-Indian social and philanthropic activities. He was a member of the Indian Legislative Assembly from 1921 to 1925 and has been a member of the Council of India in London since 1925. As Chairman of the European Schools in India Improvement Association, he has full knowledge of the needs and difficulties of the Anglo-Indian community.]

OF the many races that compose the peoples of India, the majority have poured through the passes of the north-west

[1] *Report* (Cmd. 3568, 1930), vol. i, p. 201.

frontier or, in later years, from overseas. The Anglo-Indian race, which has distinct racial characteristics of its own, is one of the few that can claim the possession of an Indian birthright. It dates back four hundred years to the period of the early Portuguese settlements on the Malabar coast, when intermarriage with the natives of the land was encouraged by the Portuguese authorities with the avowed object of strengthening their hold on the country. A similar policy was adopted by the East India Company. In 1684 the Directors wrote to their representatives in India:

'The soldiers wives shall come to their Husbands, if they can find means to satisfy, or pay the owners for their passages, and for such soldiers as are single men, if you could prudently induce them to marry Gentues, in imitation of ye dutch pollitticks, and raise from them a stock of protestant Mestizees [Eurasians].'

So comprehensive was the union of European and Asian races that the offspring of such alliances came to be known as 'Eurasians', but the name fell into disrepute, and in 1911 the term 'Anglo-Indian' was officially recognized by Government as descriptive of persons of mixed descent.

Born amidst the clash of arms, the Anglo-Indian played an important part in the consolidation of the Indian Empire. It might truly be said that during that long period of perpetual warfare 'the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded'. In 1791, however, the Directors of the East India Company decided 'That no Person, the Son of a Native Indian, shall henceforward be appointed by this Court to employment in the Civil, Military, or Marine Service of the Company'. In its application this decree closed to the community not only all covenanted, but also many of the subordinate posts in Government service, and only slowly in the course of subsequent years was the ban removed. From 1791

onwards the fortunes of the community waned, though in the Indian Mutiny, as in the Great War, individual Anglo-Indians won a high reputation for courage and resource.

No reliable statistics are available as to the numbers of the community. The 1931 census gives the figure as 98,581 for all India excluding Burma, more than half the number being in Madras and Bengal, the remainder dispersed over the other provinces along the lines of communication. The accuracy of the census figures is, however, impaired by two opposite causes. It is believed that many Indian Christians return themselves as Anglo-Indians with the idea that they will improve their social status, while on the other hand Anglo-Indians who have risen above the general level of the community are apt to record themselves as Europeans.

The legal status of the community is anomalous. It was officially stated in the House of Commons in 1925 that

> 'for the purposes of employment under Government and inclusion in schemes of Indianization, members of the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Community are statutory natives of India. For the purposes of education and internal security, their status, in so far as it admits of definition, approximates to that of European British subjects'.

This statement seems to suggest that the Anglo-Indian possesses a double birthright: actually, he has fallen between two stools, a fact recognized both by the Montagu-Chelmsford Report and the Simon Commission. Neither report, however, was able to indicate the precise direction in which a remedy was to be found, for admittedly the problems of the community are economic rather than political.

Deprived of opportunities of Government service in the higher grades, Anglo-Indians eventually found openings

in subordinate positions both on the railways and in the telegraph, postal, police, and junior magisterial services, where loyalty and devotion to duty are as essential to the external and internal security of India as in the fighting forces. Anglo-Indians are also to be found in the customs, survey, and medical departments. These traditional avenues of employment have, however, been steadily contracting, although the Anglo-Indian might reasonably have expected to benefit by the Indianization of the services. The political influence of 98,000 Anglo-Indians obviously cannot be compared with that of 177 million Hindus, but the causes of the Anglo-Indian discontents lie deeper. Nomination is being superseded by examination, and in academic learning the Hindu excels. Anglo-Indian schools, run on English lines, have been handicapped by inadequate financial resources; and, moreover, the poverty of the community has compelled boys and girls to leave school at a comparatively early age, insufficiently equipped for the battle of life. Relying so largely on government employment, the Anglo-Indian in the main has neither sought an opening nor created a need for his services outside official life; and both time and better education are required to absorb into wider channels of work the large numbers dispossessed of their traditional employment.

The first Round Table Conference of 1930–1, at which the Anglo-Indian delegate played a prominent part, admitted these facts. The Services Sub-Committee recognized 'the special position of the Anglo-Indians in respect of public employment'; and recommended 'that special consideration should be given to their claims for employment in the Services'.

The difficulties of the problem are enhanced by the standard of living adopted by the community, which is

based on, though falling far below, western standards. That standard prohibits competition with the Indian artisan and shopkeeper, and also recruitment in the ranks of the Indian fighting forces. Settlement on the land has been attempted on more than one occasion, but experiments have not proved encouraging.

In the past the Anglo-Indians have lacked adequate leadership by reason of their poverty, their small numbers scattered throughout a vast area, and the leakage from the community at the top. In recent years economic distress has roused them to concerted action, and Lord Lothian has publicly testified that no other community put before the Indian Franchise Committee, over which he presided, a better or more reasoned statement of its case. The communal award of His Majesty's Government in August 1932 allotted to Anglo-Indians twelve seats in seven provincial legislatures. It is clear, however, that a community representing under 0·04 per cent. of the total population cannot expect to influence the course of legislation by its vote.

It is often said that peoples of mixed descent inherit the vices of both races; but this is not true of the Anglo-Indians as a whole. Sensitive and quick to wilt under unsympathetic treatment, the Anglo-Indian has inherited from his Indian forebears a gentle and kindly disposition and an idealism somewhat divorced from the realities of life. From both sides in varying degree he can claim an inheritance of steadfast loyalty to his King and to those under whom he serves and a high standard of family devotion.

The guardianship of the community is passing from the hands of the English official into the care of the Indian statesman. The growth of a spirit of self-help and self-reliance can only come slowly in a community relegated for generations to subordinate positions and is no solution

of immediate difficulties. Greatly impoverished in common with the general population by present economic depressions, the community has suffered still further from the policy of Indianization and the reduction of its educational grants. It requires the present protection of its chief employer, the State, and in the future more generous provision for its adequate education. The community has suffered from the attitude adopted towards it, both by Indians and Europeans, which has fostered a sense of racial inferiority; and its resuscitation demands the sympathetic co-operation of those who should regard themselves as joint trustees for a race they have jointly brought into being.

V. THE INDIAN CHRISTIANS

By THE REV. WILLIAM PATON

[The Rev. William Paton was Missionary Secretary of the Student Christian Movement from 1911 to 1921; General Secretary of the National Christian Council of India, Burma, and Ceylon from 1922 to 1927; and since 1927 has been Secretary of the International Missionary Council.]

THE Indian Christians have now become the third community, numerically, in India. At the census of 1921 their total numbers in British India and the Indian States combined were about 4½ millions, of whom about 1¾ millions were Roman Catholics, while of the remaining 2¾ millions between half and three-quarters of a million belonged to the different sections of the ancient Syrian Church of Malabar—the 'Syrian Christians of St. Thomas'. During the succeeding decade the growth of the Christian community has been remarkable. The combined numbers in British India (exclusive of Burma) and the Indian States at the census of 1931 were 5,961,794, an increase of 32 per cent. While the Indian Christian community is widely

distributed over the whole of India, it is more numerous in Madras and the States of Travancore and Cochin than elsewhere. In Travancore and Cochin the proportion of Christians to the whole population is more than one in four, and only in the Tinnevelly district is that figure approached in British India.

It is a well-known fact that the greater part of the Indian Christian community has been drawn into the various sections of the Church from the lower strata of the Hindu community—the depressed classes as they have come to be called. The regions in which the most conspicuous movements have taken place from these classes into the Christian fold are the Punjab, parts of the United Provinces, parts of Bombay, the Telugu country, both in Hyderabad State and in the British districts, and in Travancore. In addition to these accessions from the outcastes, large Christian communities have grown up among the tribal peoples of Chota Nagpur and of the Khasi and the Lushai Hills of Assam. It was estimated recently that the number of converts to Christianity from Islam was about the same as that from the Hindu castes. Probably this would not now be the case, as in portions of southern India considerable numbers of the Sudra community have begun to enter the Church.

The Indian Christian community has a remarkable standard of literacy, compared with other Indian communities, if it is remembered what a large proportion has been drawn from the lower strata to whom education has been in the past virtually unknown. More than one in five of the community are able to satisfy the literacy test, and the proportion of women able to read and write is only surpassed in the small and prosperous community of the Parsees. The political significance of this educational advance is obvious.

The place taken by the Indian Christian community in the political life of India has been inconspicuous until recent days, even when the small numbers of the Christians are kept in mind. The reasons are obvious. They are, first, the fact that so large a proportion of the total number of Christians came from the depressed classes who took no interest in political affairs; and, second, that the bulk of the community had been intimately associated with foreign missionary bodies, British, American, and European, and tended naturally to cling to its foreign leaders and to eschew identification with the political and especially the nationalist tendencies of developing India. Under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919, however, the Indian Christians received definite recognition. In the Madras Presidency five seats were given to Christians, based on a special electorate in five constituencies. In the other provinces a seat was provided for them by nomination, and in the central Legislative Assembly similarly a nominated seat was given to a representative of the Christian community.

The last few years have seen a considerable development in the political consciousness of the Indian Christians. As with other communities, the illiterate masses have no knowledge of politics, but the educated and semi-educated sections of the community have begun to interest themselves definitely in the political questions confronting the country. Probably the Liberal or moderate party represents the views of the bulk of the leading Christians who interest themselves in politics, but in proportion to their numbers they have produced a not unworthy body of men of independent judgement who are more than the echoes of a party. The younger generation of the educated Christians is on the whole strongly nationalist; the views of Christian students, for instance, are not markedly

different from those of other students of their age. It is a commonplace among the educated Christians that to be a Christian does not mean to be denationalized or to have no sympathy with the patriotic movements of the day.

It is worthy of note that the leaders of the Protestant Christians have on the whole separated themselves consistently from the demand for communal electorates. They have urged before the Simon Commission and elsewhere that joint electorates are best for the country, and did not ask that they, as a small minority, should be excepted from such electorates. But they also added that, should the principle of communal electorates be adopted, they would then wish to have special provision made for Christians. In the proposals contained in the British Government's communal award of August 1932 the Indian Christians are to receive a total of twenty-one seats in the legislatures of seven of the nine provinces. It is probable that the experience of Madras, where the five Indian Christian seats were contested mainly on Protestant-Catholic lines, strengthened the antipathy felt by some of the leading Christians to the communal solution. It is further certain that a progressive and relatively well-educated community such as the Indian Christians is likely to do better on a basis of general competition than by any system of reservation of posts in communal proportions. However this may be, while the Roman Catholic spokesmen stood for separate electorates, the Protestant leaders threw their weight with those other Indians who desired by all means to avoid the electoral segregation of communities.

Chapter VIII

WOMEN IN INDIAN POLITICS

By MRS. R. M. GRAY, M.A. (CANTAB.)

[Mrs. Gray resided for many years in India, and has always taken the deepest interest in the welfare of Indian women. She helped in founding joint societies of English and Indian women, such as the National Council of Women in India, and the Federation of University Women in India. Mrs. Gray twice visited every province in India; in 1913 to report on the facilities for higher education of girls, and again in 1932 in the company of Miss Eleanor Rathbone, M.P., during the inquiries of the Indian Franchise Committee, when she was able to obtain much first-hand information as to the present state of the women's movement in India.]

THE history of the women's movement in India may be divided into the pre-war period, in which the pioneers, either as individuals or in isolated societies, worked for social and educational reforms, and the post-war period, when the movement became political, feminist, and All-Indian.

It should, however, be noted that the women who are interested in public affairs are mainly adult literates. The total female population of the nine major provinces of British India at the 1931 census was 123 millions, of whom 63 millions were adults over 20 years of age; but of these latter, only about $1\frac{1}{4}$ million were literate in the sense of being able to read and write a letter in any one language, and only about 150,000 were literate in English. These figures should be kept in view, though the influence of the intellectual few is indeed much greater than their proportion in numbers.

As the idea of Home Rule began to be more clearly envisaged through the final years of the Great War, Indian women with political ambitions realized that they must

bestir themselves, or they might wake up to find that India had a new constitution from which women had been left out. They therefore approached the Secretary of State, on his visit to India in 1917, asking that women should be enfranchised under the new constitution, and so the movement began.

It is difficult to-day, when women have become so articulate in their demands, to remember that before this deputation waited on Mr. Montagu there was no feminist movement, no All-India women's organization, though it is true that women had always been allowed to take part in the affairs of the Indian National Congress.

Women had been deeply stirred by the Great War, and had acquired the habit of working together on non-communal lines to alleviate the sufferings of the troops. This habit stood them in good stead after the War and has helped to keep the movement outside and above the communal battle. Before the War, the grouping of women together for social work had been on provincial, linguistic, or communal lines. After the War, women began to grope towards an All-Indian programme and to realize that they had aims and objects, other than those of men, for which they must organize themselves.

Thus in 1917–18 the women's movement began to be feminist as well as All-Indian, but it has never become stridently or aggressively feminist. Since women form a minority of the population, are nearly all married, and in any case do not enter into the professions or industry in such numbers as to compete with men, there is in India so far neither economic nor political rivalry.

But before passing to the evolution of political thought among women during the last fifteen years, it is necessary to call to mind that there are several instances in the history of India of women showing marked political

sagacity as rulers of States. The States of Indore, Bhopal, and Travancore have at different times been governed by women with conspicuous success. In the matter of girls' education Travancore has a premier place among both Indian States and British Indian Provinces. In certain other States, such as Baroda, Janjira, and Sangli, women have used their influence as wives of the Rulers to advance the education or political status of women.

It was a disappointment to the educated women of India to find that women had not been enfranchised under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1921. The electoral rules had, however, been so framed that any provincial legislative council could enfranchise women, if it saw fit, and Madras and Bombay took advantage of this clause before the end of the year 1921. The United Provinces followed with a unanimous vote for women's suffrage in 1923, and the Central Provinces, Punjab, and Bengal three years later. Finally, Bihar and Orissa, and Assam joined the majority, so that women were enfranchised on the same terms as men, throughout British India, within ten years of the passing of the reforms. This was a remarkable and unlooked-for development in the annals of Indian history, for it had not been expected that women would desire to go to the polls, or that men would desire to see them there. The fact that only an infinitesimal number of women hold property in their own right and so are eligible for the electoral roll does not affect the principle, so promptly recognized by Indian politicians, that women should exercise the right of voting. Just as at the annual meetings of the National Congress the men had always admitted women as delegates and speakers, and had elected two women (Mrs. Besant and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu) as presidents, so now they showed no sex prejudice against admitting women to full citizenship, at least in theory.

The years 1921–31 were full of 'for-the-first-time' records for women. In 1923 women for the first time voted both for the provincial legislative councils and for the central Legislative Assembly. (The further privilege of voting for the Assembly was conceded wherever women voted for their provincial councils.) In 1926 women were for the first time eligible as members of the legislatures. In 1927 Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi was the first woman member of a provincial council (Madras), and was chosen as its deputy-president. Dr. Reddi was a nominated member, and so far no woman has been elected to any provincial council, or to the Assembly. Women have not yet been made eligible for the Council of State (the central Second Chamber), the only fortress which has not yet fallen to them. In 1925 Mrs. Poonem Lukhose became a Minister of State to the Travancore Government, always the most advanced government in India as regards women's emancipation and education.

It is a fact that women in India have not had to fight a stiff battle against entrenched masculine privilege in order to assert their civic equality with men. They have just blown their trumpets once, twice, or thrice, and the walls of Jericho have fallen. They have happily escaped an embittering struggle and have entered easily into the new domain of citizenship almost side by side with men. It is fortunate for them that in the days of their brief agitation for the vote that badge of citizenship was not of great account. Politically-minded men were in large numbers refusing to take any part in elections. Party organizations to work up election fever were non-existent. In the villages a general election, like general inoculation in time of plague, was but a dimly realized and pointless invention of Government, which in any case went on as usual and was in no way responsible to the electorate. If

women wanted to play with a meaningless bauble, why should they not? This was no doubt the attitude of the years 1921–31, but the gain to women remains and will be valuable in the future, when the vote becomes something worth having.

We have so far been examining the theoretic equality between men and women which in practice works out as extreme inequality. This is due to the fact that the present (1932) qualification for voting is property, and few women, especially Hindu women, possess any property in their own right. The result is great disparity in the voting strength of the two sexes. Women, in fact, number at present less than a twentieth of the electorate in British India. (The numbers vary from 1 woman to 10 men in Madras to 1 woman to 114 men in Assam.) The present total number of enfranchised men in the nine Governors' Provinces is 6,792,821 and of women 315,651, representing in all less than 3 per cent. of the population.

The Franchise Committee of the Round Table Conference (at which two ladies, Begum Shah Nawaz of the Punjab and Mrs. Subbarayan of Madras were delegates) declared in January 1931 that no system of franchise could be considered satisfactory where such a great disparity existed between the sexes, and felt that some special qualifications should be prescribed for women. With this end in view the Indian Franchise (Lothian) Committee of 1932 set out to secure a substantial increment in the present ratio of women to men voters. They came to the conclusion (para. 213 of report) that about one-fifth of the voters should be women in order to 'compel candidates to consider their interests and opinions, to awaken political interest among women, and to make their votes an effective lever, particularly in effecting reforms of special concern to women and children'. They therefore proposed

that in addition to the women who already vote in virtue of holding an independent property qualification, the wives and widows of men on the special electoral roll for the Assembly, and also all literate women, should be enfranchised.

The Franchise Committee accordingly proposed to enfranchise $6\frac{2}{3}$ million women, representing $10\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the adult female population in the nine major provinces of British India, or twenty-one times the existing electorate. The cases of two provinces may be taken as examples. In Bombay there would be 50,000 with an independent property qualification, 163,000 enfranchised on account of literacy, and 592,000 on account of their husbands' property qualifications; in all three-quarters of a million, being 1 woman to 4 men in the proposed new electorate. Again, in the United Provinces there would be 414,000 qualified on account of property, 128,000 by literacy, and 1,100,000 by reason of their husbands' property; in all $1\frac{1}{2}$ million, being 1 woman to 4 men.

So much for the women's electorate. We now come to the still more difficult question of securing their presence in the legislatures. The Simon Commission and the Franchise Committee held that during the formative period there should be sufficient women in the legislatures to express their opinions and make their influence felt. They therefore proposed that a small number of seats should be reserved for women in the provincial councils for the first ten years, and that these women should be not nominated or co-opted but elected in specially formed constituencies containing both men and women. Thus no woman would be elected unless she had stood in an open election and canvassed both men and women. Women would thus have had some valuable training for the time when special facilities are abolished.

The above proposals for the women electors and candidates did not meet with the approval of the principal organizations of the women of India. Both inside and outside the Congress party, Indian women are in favour of adult suffrage and no reservation of seats for women, and are quite unimpressed with the practical difficulties of these demands. The enormous expense of adult suffrage, the indifference of the peasant women, the unwieldy bulk of constituencies, the impossibility of securing reliable polling officers for the whole adult population, all these reasons for a policy of gradualness leave them cold. In their desire for the whole loaf, they would rather starve than accept a half loaf; and if women's special interests are shelved because no seats are reserved for them in the legislatures, that seems to them better than any compromise with their ideal of complete equality with men.

In August 1932 the communal award of His Majesty's Government allocated to women thirty-seven seats in provincial legislatures. As it was essential that women members should not be drawn disproportionately from one community, the British Government were obliged to allocate these seats to different communities; thus, in Madras, of the eight women members of Council six will be elected by general (i.e. mainly Hindu) constituencies, one by a Muhammadan, and one by an Indian Christian constituency.

It is a vexed question whether women, if enfranchised, will go to the poll, and whether *purdah* arrangements and women polling-officers will be necessary as inducements, or not. Where women have been enfranchised in large numbers, as in local boards, the percentage of women who vote is not much below that of men; but they still seem reluctant to vote for the legislatures, where they are few and conspicuous as voters. Compare the 14 per cent.

of women voting for the Madras Legislative Council with the 60 per cent. voting in the last municipal election. Each province, in fact each district, will have to settle for itself whether *purdah* polling-booths are necessary, as custom varies so much.

Before the War, women were grouped only on provincial or communal lines to promote some form of social service. Apart from the role they played in Congress, they did not meet for All-India consultation or action. But communal organization was inappropriate to women's war work, and, after the War, women found that all communities, Hindus and Christians, Gujaratis and Marathas, Sikhs and Muhammadans, Brahmins and Non-Brahmins, had got into a habit of working together, at least in the big towns. This new feeling of All-Indian solidarity was soon carried over to peace work and has, in fact, remained during the subsequent period a characteristic of women's organizations, in happy distinction from the unending communal differences between men. Women's 'objection to be dragged into communal controversies in any manner was emphatic, convincing, and, if we may add, most welcome'.[1]

Three All-India women's organizations have arisen since the War. *The Women's Indian Association* (Madras 1917) has as one of its aims to secure the adequate representation of women on public bodies. *The National Council of Women in India* (1925) has also women's suffrage as one of the planks in its programme, but it devotes its attention mainly to co-ordinating social reform activities and to keeping Indian women in touch with women of other lands. *The All-India Women's Conference on Educational and Social Reform* (1926) provides an important platform from which women can voice their views. It meets once

[1] Minority Report, Indian Franchise Committee (Cmd. 4086, 1932), p. 227.

a year in one or another big city, and its rapid growth in popularity is some gauge of the number of politically-minded women of India. The fact that not only its annual meeting, but also its constituent conferences in all parts of India attract hundreds of women to discuss such questions as the restraint of early marriage, the disabilities of women in matters of property, compulsory education for girls, and kindred subjects, indicates the growth of political consciousness in Indian women. The meeting of December 1931 reaffirmed the principle that the Conference should avoid party politics. These articulate women may be few in number compared to the vast inarticulate mass, but they are rapidly growing both in numbers and in the power to make themselves heard.

Within the Congress party women have now a special organization of their own, the Desh Sevikas (servants of their country) vowed to only peaceful methods of persuasion. These women were called upon by Mr. Gandhi to undertake the difficult task of picketing cloth and liquor shops, a task carried through with such conspicuous devotion to peaceful methods that in some places both police and Congressmen called upon the women to maintain order in times of dangerous rioting. Many of them have gone to prison and suffered much for their ideal of immediate and unconditional Home Rule for India.

Women are beginning to be called on to take their share of public service outside the legislatures. Almost all municipalities now have women either nominated or elected. Several have been returned at the head of the poll, having canvassed successfully their mainly male electorate. They are also to be found in increasing numbers on district and local boards, but they are not yet present in sufficient numbers to enforce attenion to the needs of women and children. For instance, during the

last decade, while education has been a transferred subject, and a woman here and there has served on elected bodies dealing with education, the disparity in the amount spent on boys' and girls' education has been steadily increasing in favour of boys, making the already yawning gulf between the number of literate men and women still more ominously wide. India's elected representatives have been willing to concede to women equality of political status, at least in theory, but they have not yet shown the same generosity when it comes to the distribution of public funds, or to the division of private property between sons and daughters. The almost complete economic dependence of Hindu women is the next great barrier in their forward march. In 1932 a Hindu Widows' Property Bill, to secure a widow some share in her husband's property, had a hostile reception in the Legislative Assembly.

If since the War women have sprung fully armed into the forefront of the political struggle, like Athene from the head of Zeus, their startling advent may be put down partly to long years of initiation in social service, under leaders such as Mrs. Ramabai Ranade and Pandita Ramabai, and partly to the infiltration of education and of the key-language, English, among the upper classes. Indian women were, in fact, more ripe for cohesive action and rapid advance than any one had foreseen in the pre-war years. The enthusiastic support which was given to the Child Marriage (Restraint) Bill of 1930 was the first-fruit of their political coming-of-age. They should from now onwards provide an essential and valuable part of the machinery of government. Instead of clogging the action of the machine as a dead weight and hampering by sheer inertia its forward movement, as women did under most of the period covered by this book, they will now be able to provide both driving force and ballast.

Chapter IX

THE LEGISLATURES AND THE COMING OF PARLIAMENTARY INSTITUTIONS

By PROFESSOR JOHN COATMAN, C.I.E.

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THE year 1861 marks a definite epoch in India's constitutional progress, for the Indian Councils Act of that date makes specific provision for the representation of non-official opinion in the various legislative bodies of the country. It is true that the degree of representation conceded was slight, the scope of the bodies concerned was very restricted, and the non-official representatives were to be nominated by the Governor-General. Nevertheless, the principle of representation was admitted, and the Act of 1861 is thus the legitimate progenitor of the Government of India Act of 1919, and of other Acts still to come.

Like all British political institutions, the Act of 1861 represents the result of a process of orderly evolution. It did not spring fully fledged into being. The primeval ancestor of the central Indian legislature of to-day is the Governor-General's Council, originally formed by the Act of 1833 to supersede the various provincial executives of those days as law-making bodies. Naturally, something like legislative anarchy had supervened on the exercise of law-making powers by three separate bodies, the Governor-General's Council in Bengal and the Madras

and Bombay Councils; not to mention the extension to India from time to time of Acts passed by Parliament in London. After 1833 law-making powers, valid for all India, became concentrated in the Governor-General in Council, the latter consisting of four members. In 1861 a fifth ordinary member was added to the Governor-General's Council, and provision was made for the nomination by the Governor-General of not less than six or more than twelve additional members, of whom not less than one-half were to be non-official. By the same Act of 1861, the only other two provincial legislative councils then in existence—those of Bombay and Madras—were increased by one more official member and by additional members nominated on the same principle as in the Governor-General's Council. Certain powers of legislation, not strictly defined, were given to these two provincial councils, but they could be exercised only under the supervision and with the ultimate sanction always of the Governor-General. Bengal received its council in 1862, but after this there was a long gap until 1886, when a legislative council was constituted for the United Provinces. The Punjab and Burma obtained their councils in 1897, whilst the other Indian provinces, as known to-day, had to wait almost until the outbreak of the Great War. Thus Bihar and Orissa got its legislative council in 1912, as also did Assam, whilst the Central Provinces had to wait one year longer. Of course all these are new provinces formed during the present century; and, in fact, Assam and the Central Provinces were still Chief Commissionerships when legislative councils were first assigned to them. The various changes in the composition, structure and powers of the different councils, both central and provincial, will be traced later. From 1861 onwards the constitutional developments which have resulted in

covering India with a number of representative bodies have proceeded without interruption.

The membership of the Governor-General's Council under the Act of 1861 was small, and in spite of the presence of unofficial representatives its proceedings were entirely dominated by the official members. The proceedings of these old councils under the 1861 Act were published regularly and are available for consultation. Those who examine them will notice how few are the number of speakers who took part in the debates and how the decisions of the executive were very seldom interfered with.

It was the same in the provinces. Here the membership of the provincial councils was even smaller than that of the Governor-General's Council, and their powers were more restricted. They could not pass any measure affecting any Act of Parliament or, without obtaining previous sanction of the Governor-General in Council, do anything to affect any of the departments under the direct administration of the Government of India; nor could they alter any Act passed by the Governor-General's Legislative Council. Nevertheless, the provincial legislative councils were in a position to do much useful work. An examination of the enactments known as Local and Special Laws, which were passed by each provincial council to regulate matters of importance to the province concerned, will show that the scope of these old councils was by no means negligible. In these compilations will be found Acts relating to various phases of police administration, of public health, local transport, and so on. Of course, as in the central council, the will of the executive was the prevailing influence; but, by the addition of non-official members, popular opinion was to some extent made effective. Although, according to the letter of the

law, the non-official members had no more than consultative powers, nevertheless, their influence was from time to time effective, and, on occasions, even decisive.

The Indian Councils Act of 1892 increased the numbers of all legislative councils, both central and provincial, and, what is most important, introduced—in a very incomplete form, it is true—the principle of election of the non-official members. Further, the Act gave members the right to discuss the annual financial statement, and also to put questions under certain conditions. Thus the councils became more than merely advisory. The central Legislative Council retained its old number of sixteen additional members, which, in practice, limited the number of non-officials to ten, because of the necessity of keeping an official majority. Of these ten seats, four were given according to recommendations by the non-official members of the four existing provincial councils, namely, of the three Presidencies and the United Provinces. A fifth seat was filled on the recommendation of the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce. The remaining five non-official members were nominated by the Viceroy. As in 1919, Parliament and the Government of India felt that they could go somewhat farther in the provinces than at the centre, and so the majority of the non-official seats in the provincial councils were filled by the 'recommendation' of various bodies, such as the municipal and district boards, groups of large landowners, chambers of commerce, and universities. It will be noticed that the word 'election' is avoided in the 1892 Act. Nevertheless, in the provinces the recommending bodies were given wide powers of choice, and, in effect, the members appointed on their recommendations were elected by these bodies. The numbers of the provincial councils were increased by the same Act. In the three Presidencies, the numbers went up from twelve

to twenty, whilst in the United Provinces the number was increased from nine to fifteen.

At first sight it appears that, apart from the incomplete introduction of the principle of election, the 1892 Act did not make any material change in the status or powers of the Indian legislative councils. This, however, is a mistake. There are many members of these old Lansdowne Councils, as they are called, still living; and these men can tell how the power of interpellation and of discussion of the financial statement did bring a breath of life and reality into the proceedings of the councils, and quite definitely marked a stage in the development of popular government in India.

It is impossible to mention here the somewhat numerous minor changes made in the legislative machinery of India between 1861 and 1919, for we must concentrate on the main landmarks. And the next one to which we come is the famous Act of 1909, the so-called Morley-Minto reforms. Here, again, these reforms were not meant to introduce any revolutionary change into the system of government in India, and John Morley made it quite clear that the 1909 Act was not meant to be in any way the harbinger of responsible self-government in India. Still, the changes made by the Morley-Minto reforms were large and important. Once more the numbers of all the provincial councils were increased. Those in the three Presidencies and the United Provinces were raised to fifty, and in the Punjab and Burma to thirty. Again, to the Bihar and Orissa council, constituted later in 1912, were given fifty members, whilst Assam and the Central Provinces were given twenty-five each. By the reforms of 1909 all the provincial councils were given a non-official majority, whilst Bengal was actually given a small elected majority. Members were now given great freedom in

asking questions and criticizing the doings of the executive. Resolutions could be moved, points of order raised, and votes taken. Nevertheless, resolutions passed by the councils were not formally binding on the executive Government, nor had the councils any power of effective control in any department of Government. The history of the Morley-Minto provincial councils shows that very rarely was there anything like a revolt of non-official members, and the provincial governments rarely experienced the embarrassment of an adverse vote. The central legislature—a unicameral body still—was very considerably expanded, its numbers going up to sixty, of whom not more than twenty-eight could be official, whilst three non-officials to represent specified communities were nominated by the Governor-General, who also had the right of appointing to two other seats. For all the councils the right of election was specifically conceded, and with it came one of the most controversial and difficult features of the Indian political situation to-day, namely, the introduction of the system of separate electorates for the Muslim community. In the central Legislative Council there were twenty-seven elected seats which were shared out among special constituencies such as landowners in seven provinces, Muslims in five, and two chambers of commerce, whilst the remainder were filled by election by non-official members of the nine provincial legislative councils. The general status of the provinces was also improved; for under the 1909 reforms a convention grew up by which, although the central legislature retained the right to legislate for the whole of India, it did not ordinarily legislate for provincial matters falling within the competence of provincial legislative councils.

We may glance here at the broad features of the electoral system brought into being by the 1909 reforms.

Constituencies were very small, the largest of them numbering about 650 persons. Local bodies had the best representation, and landholders next. Naturally, there was very little direct connexion between the members of the legislatures, even of the provincial legislatures, and the mass of the people. For example, in the central council, of the twenty-seven elected members, eighteen represented various sectional interests, as described, whilst only nine represented the people of India as a whole. Nevertheless, by this time politics in India had become a fairly vigorous growth, and the electoral system, unsatisfactory as it was in many respects, did bring politics to the doors of many people who hitherto had had no connexion with them. In one or two provincial councils, notably in Bengal, there was vigorous and sustained criticism of Government doings, whilst the central council, with its very wide powers of discussion and interpellation, already before 1909 had produced some of the characteristic features of the life of the Indian Legislative Assembly, which was the product of the later Montagu-Chelmsford reforms.

As it happened, the Morley-Minto reforms closed one chapter of Indian political development; for with the War and its changes came Mr. Montagu's famous declaration of 1917 in the House of Commons, the gist of which was that the goal of India's political progress was responsible self-government, to be attained by progressive stages. The magic words 'responsible government for India' were thus spoken, and thenceforward political reforms in that country must be different, not only in scope but in kind, from all that had preceded them. As is well known, the present constitution of India is comprised in the Government of India Act of 1919 and the various rules made under it. The first and most striking consequences of these

reforms was the division of the sphere of Government in the provinces between two authorities, one amenable to the British Parliament and the other to the Indian electorate. This necessitated a prior classification of the subjects of government into the two spheres of central and provincial. A number of very important administrative subjects, henceforth technically known as 'provincial' subjects, were entrusted to the reformed local governments. These include local self-government; medical administration, public health, and sanitation; education; public works and water supply, with certain reservations; land revenue administration; famine relief; agriculture; fisheries and forests; co-operation; excise; the administration of justice, subject to legislation by the central Indian legislature; registration; industrial development; police; prisons; sources of provincial revenue; and many miscellaneous items. The way was thus cleared for the division, within the provinces, of the functions of government between an authority responsible to Parliament and an authority responsible to the electorate. Under the reformed constitution the provincial executives now consist of two portions. The first half is the Governor, working with Executive Councillors nominated by the Crown; the second is the Governor, working with Ministers selected from members of the provincial legislature. The first half adminiters certain subjects known as 'reserved' and is responsible for them to the central government and ultimately to Parliament. The second half deals with 'transferred' subjects and is amenable to the Indian electorate. Among the subjects so transferred to popular control are local self-government (municipal and district boards); medical administration; public health; education; public works, under a number of important heads; agriculture; industrial development; forests and fisheries; co-operation;

excise; registration; and other minor items. Thus a very large proportion of those administrative subjects on the development of which India's progress depends have now been made over directly to Indian control. This is the characteristic feature of the 1919 reforms known as dyarchy. Corresponding changes had also to be made in the financial relations between the central and provincial governments. Broadly speaking, the various sources of revenue were allocated between the Government of India and the provincial governments, the latter not sharing any of its sources with the central government. The one exception to this rule was that the provinces were entitled to part of the yield of the income-tax. Further, the provincial governments were given increased powers in taxation and borrowing.

The foregoing description has shown that the experiment of the introduction of responsible self-government in India was begun in the provinces. There is no dyarchy at the centre and consequently no specific responsibility entrusted to the central legislature; but, as the whole history of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms has shown, the bicameral Indian central legislature (consisting of the Council of State and the Indian Legislative Assembly), and particularly the Lower House, has been able to exercise immense influence on the Indian Government.

There are sixty members of the Council of State, thirty-three elected and twenty-seven nominated by the Governor-General. Not more than twenty of the nominated members may be officials. The President is appointed by the Governor-General from among the members of this Upper House. The franchise is based partly on a high property qualification, which varies in different constituencies, and partly on public service. The Council of State is meant to represent learning, experience in public

affairs, and rank and position generally, and as popular government progresses in India, it will become more and more the voice of interests which, but for its existence, might tend to lack representation. But valuable as the Council is for the political stability of India and vital as its functions are, the Legislative Assembly is the most important department of the workshop where her political future is being hammered out. Here we see the stir of life most plainly, the beginnings of political parties, and the attack and defence of Government policy. There can be no question about its representative character. Of one hundred and forty-six members, only forty are nominated, and, of these, twenty-six only may be officials.

The franchise is still fairly high for India and varies in the different provinces and the different kinds of constituencies. In Calcutta, for example, the qualification for an elector in the non-Muhammadan constituency is the payment of sixty rupees (about £4 10*s.*) per annum in consolidated rates, or assessment to income tax in the previous year on an income of not less than five thousand rupees (that is, about £375). But in Madras the qualifications for the corresponding franchise are much lower—the payment in the aggregate of twenty rupees in respect of one or more of the property tax, tax on companies, and profession tax, and an assessment to income tax which in India is assessed on annual incomes of two thousand rupees and over (about £135). These two examples will show that even for the 'popular' part of the central legislature the franchise is still kept fairly high. The electorate for the Assembly numbers about one million out of a total male adult population in British India of perhaps sixty-five millions.

The provincial legislatures are all unicameral, the provincial legislative council varying in size from province to

province, from Bengal with its 140 members, to Assam with 53 members. At least 70 per cent. of the councillors must be elected and not more than 20 per cent. may be official members. The size of the present provincial councils is thus much greater than that of the Morley-Minto councils, whilst for the very limited and indirect election to the latter has been substituted a franchise operating by direct election. For the provincial councils as for the central legislature there is a similar variety of constituencies—Muhammadan, non-Muhammadan, and special, whilst in some provinces members are nominated specially to represent the depressed classes. The total number of electors in all the provinces is now over seven millions, which means that about one in every nine adult males has got the vote. Women have been made eligible for the vote in all the provincial legislatures concerned, and in the Indian Assembly.

From what has been said above we see that the 1919 reforms have given rise to something like the beginning of a federal system for India, in the separation of the spheres of the provincial and central governments. In certain subjects of government, including those of the highest importance for the moral and material uplift of their peoples, the provinces are now, for all practical purposes, masters in their own house. To the central government is left Imperial business—external defence, and such subjects as criminal law, customs duties, currency and the like, which from their character are incapable of being devolved on any authority smaller than an All-India authority. The central government is the co-ordinating and safeguarding power over all India. In the provinces many important subjects of government, as already stated, have been made over bodily to the control of the legislatures acting through Ministers. Also, the so-

called 'reserved' subjects cannot, from the nature of things, be altogether reserved from the influence, more or less direct, according to circumstances, of the provincial legislatures. The whole spirit of the reforms and the logic of events must inevitably force the executives in the provinces and in the central government to look to the legislatures for sanction and support for their actions; that is, to legislatures which all have an elected majority and in which the Government is face to face with Indian opinion. Lastly, Indians have been admitted to the central and provincial Executive Councils and are thus part of the very mainspring of the administration. There are three Indians on the Governor-General's Executive Council.

What were the tasks placed before these legislatures? Certainly they were not concerned with sweeping and spectacular constitutional changes. A certain amount of adjustment was to be expected. There have been continual adjustments between the central and the provincial governments, and the scope of the 'responsible' half of the provincial governments has advanced here and receded there according to the play of events. The essence of the problem which faced both central and provincial legislatures was step by step to adapt the institutions of responsible government to the conditions of India. It was for the central legislature to play the main part in harmonizing clashes of interest and ideals between different communities. In front of the provincial legislatures lay the work of developing the 'nation building' activities of the provincial governments—activities devoted to education, medicine, local self-government, and so on. Any judgement as to the success or otherwise of the legislatures in respect of these tasks must perforce be broad and sweeping. On the whole, India has not been well treated by fate in this first crucial experiment of

applying the principles and machinery of responsible self-government to her own government. Financial stringency and industrial depression have marked many of the years which have passed since 1921, when the constitution was inaugurated. This has led to many strains and frictions which might have been avoided altogether in happier economic circumstances. Then, too, partly owing to the impulse to political life given by the reforms, and partly to more ancient and enduring causes, inter-communal strife, particularly between Hindus and Muslims, has embittered public life. Non-co-operation and civil disobedience from time to time have checked constitutional progress and destroyed much of the value of the experiment. At two General Elections, namely, those of 1920 and 1930, the Congress party, as such, did not seek admission to the legislatures, and the absence of this, the strongest and best organized political party in the country, naturally weakened the legislatures and held up their development into a true council of the nation. Also, when the Congress party was represented, that is, after the elections of 1923 and 1926, the avowed purpose of its members was to wreck the working of the new constitution from the inside by consistent obstruction. In this purpose, however, they did not on the whole succeed, because there was outside the Congress party sufficient strength which, in union with the official *blocs* and the nominated members, was able to frustrate the intentions of the adherents of the Congress. Nevertheless, in two provinces, namely, Bengal and the Central Provinces, Congress representatives in the legislative councils were able to make the functioning of the constitution temporarily impossible; and the Governors had to take the entire administration into the hands of themselves and their Executive Councils.

Undoubtedly, one of the hopes entertained at the birth

of the new legislatures under the 1919 Act was that true political parties would emerge which would make the further development of parliamentary institutions, both at the centre and in the provinces, smooth and natural. On the whole, this hope has not been realized. The Congress party might be described as a true political party, although so far it has never developed a constructive policy. Apart from the Congress party, there have been, in the central legislature at any rate, only more or less temporary groups formed and held together for personal or communal reasons. In one or two provinces, however, there has been a slightly more hopeful development. Thus, in Madras, the Justice or non-Brahmin party, formed to redress the economic and administrative balance as between Brahmins and non-Brahmins, has by now developed into a party with a social and economic programme and a regular party organization. It has been strong enough to form and support ministries in Madras and Bombay, and has recently been extended into the Central Provinces. In the Punjab there has been a quite distinct cleavage between town and country; and, although an agrarian party can hardly be said to have definitely emerged, nevertheless, rural interests have at times been strong enough to override merely communal interests. Still, it must be acknowledged that the rise of true political parties, capable of forming governments and oppositions, is still a development of the future.

In spite of all this, however, the record of both central and provincial legislatures is impressive. At the centre, far-reaching legal, financial, and social reforms have been carried out, and there is not the slightest doubt that both the character and scope of the policy of the central government, in all its operations, have been deeply influenced by the central legislature, and particularly by

the Legislative Assembly. But, as the Legislative Assembly gained experience, and as the strength of political agitation in India developed, the Government has had to function against continually increasing friction between it and the elected members. All too often the latter have concentrated their attention and devoted their efforts to impracticable demands for sweeping political reforms, and have opposed the Government merely for the sake of opposition, irrespective of the merits or demerits of particular proposals and of their effect on the welfare of India. On the other hand, there have been occasions when the Assembly has supported the Government in its struggle against disorder and unrest. But it may be said as a general truth that the opposition in the Legislative Assembly has throughout concentrated rather on trying to remove the restrictions on the action of the legislature than on exploiting to the full the powers entrusted to it. And certainly this has been true during the last few years of the life of the central legislature. At times the patent and undisputed interests of India have been sacrificed to the agitation against political grievances. The most outstanding example of this is the action of the Assembly in regard to the Public Safety Bill of recent years, when the Government, seeking to arm itself with powers against the activities of irresponsible political agitators from outside, were thwarted by an opposition which did not concern itself with the rights or wrongs of the particular matter in issue. These remarks do not apply to the Council of State, which has throughout behaved as a true senate of the nation. In times of great stress, the members of the Council kept their heads and worked and thought for India and not for any one interest or community. Time after time, they moderated and controlled the heedless enthusiasm of the Lower House and saved their country from serious hurt. In

economic matters especially, they have brought knowledge and honesty of purpose to bear on their work, and more than once they have indeed probably prevented the great experiment of the 1919 Act from being brought to a premature conclusion.

The history of the provincial legislatures during these years has, on the whole, been less dramatic and chequered than that of the Legislative Assembly. The constitution was actually brought to a standstill in two provinces; but elsewhere it has functioned continuously, and in some areas, notably in Madras and the Punjab, with distinctly encouraging success. The dyarchic system was not worked on exactly the same lines in all provinces. In some provinces, notably in Madras and Bengal, attempts were made to establish a practically unitary system of government, the Governor, executive councillors, and ministers meeting regularly together to discuss general policy. In Madras, during the first two and a half years of dyarchy, only seven meetings of the executive council separately were held, whilst no fewer than 114 'cabinet' or joint meetings of executive councillors and ministers took place during the same period. In Bengal the system gradually approximated to that of Madras. At first matters dealing with reserved subjects were settled by the Governor and his executive council, and transferred subjects were the concern of the Governor and his ministers. Questions common to both sides were dealt with in joint meetings of executive councils and ministers, and this was the case especially with reference to the budget, financial policy, and all legislative proposals. After about a year, however, the strict principles of dyarchy were abandoned and a 'unitary' system of government like that of Madras grew up. In both these provinces, ministers and executive councillors supported each other, and provincial policy

became, for all practical purposes, the policy of a unified government. Nowhere else has joint action between the two halves of the government been carried to anything like this extent. In some provinces the ministers and executive councillors meet only to consider questions which definitely affect both transferred and reserved departments. In others, as now in the Central Provinces, all important matters of policy are discussed at joint meetings, whilst in the Punjab there are regular meetings of both sides at which each minister or councillor present brings up questions which he thinks ought to be discussed in common, and important cases are brought up under the orders of the Governor. From time to time attempts were made in some of the provinces, notably in the United Provinces, to establish a principle of joint responsibility of ministers, but these attempts too often failed.

Perhaps it is not unfair to say that, on the whole, politics have been more real in the provinces than at the centre. This, of course, is only natural because of the existence in the provinces of partial responsibility. Further, the provincial legislatures were dealing all the time with things which directly affected the life and welfare of the people, who have been thus compelled more and more to take an interest in the doings of their local members. It is too much to say that the villagers of India are to any large extent politically minded, but they are all the time becoming so. In 1921 it could have been said with truth that there was practically no interest in politics in the Indian villages, but this is certainly not true to-day, and it will be less true to-morrow. Provincial legislative activity since the reforms has been devoted more to the subject of local self-government than to any other single item, although the development of education, particularly primary education, runs it close. Large numbers of new schools have

been provided, attempts have been made here and there for adult education, and every province in India now has compulsory primary education in certain areas. It is very surprising, however, that an examination of the proceedings of provincial councils reveals a striking dearth of Acts which deal directly with the economic welfare of the masses, particularly of the rural masses. Especially in agriculture, a subject over which provincial legislatures now have direct control, is the record disappointing. In certain provinces, notably Bengal, the United Provinces, and Bihar and Orissa, attempts have been made to reform tenancy laws with the object of improving the economic position and the status of tenants, but such action is, unfortunately, all too rare. The most fruitful action on behalf of rural welfare has been accomplished through the agency of the co-operative societies, which were started before the days of dyarchy and have in all provinces been transferred to the control of ministers. The operations of the societies have been extended to cover more activities than the provision of agricultural credit, and the record of most councils in this respect is one on which they can look back with satisfaction. Again, in many councils excellent work has been done in the field of public finance and many sound schemes of economy and rationalization have been carried through. Even in the very thorny subject of law and order the record of most provincial councils is far from bad. But everywhere the local ministers have had to function under the severe disability of financial stringency, and since finance is a reserved department in every province this has led inevitably to considerable friction. Nevertheless, on the whole, the experience of the provinces under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms has been such as to teach many valuable lessons in the practical handling of affairs.

The system whose features and experience have been passed under review is proposed to come to an end and to be superseded by the federal government which is discussed in a later chapter. The Act of 1919 contained a clause providing for an inquiry into the working of the reforms after a period of ten years. This inquiry was actually expedited by two years in response to the repeatedly expressed wishes of representative political leaders in India, and, as is well known, the task was entrusted to a Commission headed by Sir John Simon, who had with him six British colleagues chosen from the Conservative and Labour parties in the two Houses of Parliament. No Indians were included in this Commission, but Sir John Simon devised other means of associating representative Indian leaders in his work. The experiences of the Simon Commission are in fact well known. Large and influential sections of Indian opinion boycotted their work, which, however, was completed and became, as will be described later, part of the proceedings which led up to the summoning of the Round Table Conference of 1930.

The future of the Legislative Council of Burma hangs upon the decision which will be made by the Burmese people at a General Election on 9 November 1932, as to whether or not they are in favour of separation from India. The Simon Commission in 1930 favoured immediate separation; and in December of that year a sub-committee of the Round Table Conference accepted separation in principle. A Burma Round Table Conference was convened in December 1931; and in January 1932 was announced the policy of His Majesty's Government of placing upon the Burma legislature responsibility for the administration, if the people elected for separation.

Chapter X

SOME OUTSTANDING POLITICAL LEADERS

By SIR EVAN COTTON, C.I.E.

[Member of a family of which six generations have served India, Sir Evan Cotton practised as a barrister for thirteen years in Calcutta, where he played a prominent part in the civic and social life of the city. He served as President of the Bengal Legislative Council from 1922 to 1925 and is the author of numerous works and articles on Indian historical subjects.]

THE movements and parties in India's political development with which the present volume deals lack full presentation without some description, however brief, of the personalities who led them. The men whose careers are now described are fairly representative of the major provinces and of the prevailing creeds, while they cover a period of half a century. The life story of Mr. Gandhi is reserved for a separate chapter.

Foremost among modern Indian political leaders stands GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE (1866–1915), although the movement of which he was one of the chief founders has cast aside his teaching. A Chitpavan Brahmin by caste, he belonged to the race of the Peshwas who ruled the Maratha people from 1714 to 1818 and established a hegemony over the greater part of India. The traditions of the past exercised a powerful influence over him; but his cautious and constructive mind kept his imagination within bounds and never lost its grasp of realities. He recognized the benefits which had been conferred upon India by the British connexion, and advocated moderation in constitutional advance. This was, in fact, the standpoint of the founders of the Indian National Congress. They were not enamoured of British rule, but they

saw clearly that many of the obstacles in the way of self-government could be removed only by Indians themselves. They struggled hard to prevent sober argument from developing into unreasoning invective, but events were too strong for them. Ill-digested political catchwords took the place of the solid endeavours to promote social and political reform upon which Gokhale always insisted, and which he strove to encourage by organizing in 1905 the well-known Servants of India Society at Poona. The members of this order are bound by their vows to devote their lives to public service and to forswear all private gain. They are committed to a frank acceptance of the British connexion 'as ordained, in the inscrutable dispensation of Providence, for India's good'. While setting before themselves the goal of self-government within the Empire, they recognize that it 'cannot be attained without years of earnest and patient work'. Moderation, in a word, was the essence of Gokhale's politics; and he was eminently fitted to be a guide. But it is difficult to conceive of him as the leader in any large executive task; and although he filled a larger place in Indian public life than any of his contemporaries, he never captured the allegiance of the younger generation.

The chief figure in the new movement, which has come to be known as extremism, was Gokhale's caste-fellow BAL GANGADHAR TILAK (1856–1920), who survived him by five years. Whatever may be the verdict upon Tilak's doctrine and the methods by which he enforced them, there can be no doubt that he was a born leader of men. He was the spearhead of nationalism which is based wholly upon Hinduism, and which rejects co-operation with any foreign element. *Tros, Tyriusve, mihi nullo discrimine agetur.* It mattered little whether the intruder was a Muhammadan or European; each was the represen-

tative of an alien civilization and as such each must be attacked and overthrown. The cult of Sivaji, the Maratha hero who had thrust back the Moguls from the Deccan, was fostered by him to achieve the double object of recalling Muslim discomfiture and inculcating discontent with British rule. His fanaticism was red-hot, and it led him into dangerous paths. The young Maratha Brahmin, who was convicted in 1897 of the murder of the magistrate of Poona, acknowledged at his trial that he had been influenced by the exhortations in Tilak's newspapers. So, too, another Maratha, who murdered the magistrate of Nasik some years later in 1909, while admitting that he had 'killed a good man causelessly', laid the blame for his act in the same quarter. The seed thus sown has borne fruit in the series of cowardly assassinations which are still disgracing the name of India. To Tilak also is due the conversion of the Congress to the doctrine of boycott as a means of securing self-government (*swaraj*). The first open rupture between the followers of Gokhale and those of Tilak took place at the Benares meeting of the Congress in 1905; and the final schism at the Surat Congress of 1907, when the meeting dissolved in disorder. Until Gokhale's death in 1915 the extremists remained outside the movement; but by 1920 it had passed under the control of Mr. Gandhi, who assumed the mantle of Tilak, and reshaped it to suit his own views.

Nowhere have the doctrines of Tilak done more evil work than in Bengal, but his apparent influence has been rather on the rank and file than on the leaders. Of the many leaders thrown up in that part of India much might be written. From the past we may select two—Sir Surendranath Banerjea and Mr. Chitta Ranjan Das.

Sir Surendranath Banerjea (1848–1925) is the only Brahmin among the politicians who have attained

prominence in Bengal, and, as a Kulin, his Brahminism was of the purest and most rigid character. It did not hinder him, however, from undertaking the voyage to England as a young man of twenty, or from competing successfully in 1869 for the Indian Civil Service. His official career lasted only three years. On the finding by a commission that certain irregularities had been committed, it was decided to remove him from the Service. He promptly took to politics. As an orator he was unsurpassed. Mr. H. W. Nevinson has written that, with the exception of Mr. Gladstone, he had heard no speaker use the grand and rhetorical style with more assurance and success. 'It is oratory such as few Englishmen dare venture upon for fear of drowning in the gulfs of bathos; but Surendranath loves it, as Cicero might.' With this weapon at his command he rapidly achieved a mastery over the minds of his emotional countrymen; and his connexion with the Ripon College at Calcutta, which he founded and conducted for many years, and his editorship of the *Bengalee* newspaper, increased and consolidated his hold upon the younger generation. In the early days of the Congress, which he helped to found, he twice presided over its sessions; but it was Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal which gave him his real opportunity. With almost apostolic fervour, he proclaimed the right of Bengal's people to undivided existence; and eagerly supported the boycott of British goods as a weapon to procure its reversal. The form which that reversal took, however, involved the removal of the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi; and he lived to realize that the re-union of Eastern with Western Bengal was the source of much of the trouble which subsequently overtook the Presidency. Although his anti-partition agitation undoubtedly provoked grave disorder, he was no friend of anarchical developments and was never

afraid to condemn them. Upon the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms in 1921 he accepted office as a Minister in the Bengal Government and was knighted. The criticism aroused by these apparent recantations of his former views was unjust. He had consistently made use of all the opportunities for public service of a constructive character which had presented themselves, and had done excellent work on the Calcutta Corporation and in the Bengal and Imperial legislatures. The enactment of the Calcutta Municipal Act, which he regarded as his greatest achievement, proved his undoing. It brought the Swaraj party back into public life, threw the municipal administration of Calcutta into their hands, and led to his defeat at the second General Election in 1923. He died not long afterwards.

His rival and supplanter, CHITTA RANJAN DAS (1870–1925), although a much younger man, died in the same year. If Surendranath, with his lofty brow, eagle nose, and venerable beard, recalled a Hebrew elder of the Old Testament, Chitta Ranjan, with his mobile features and his flowing robes, presented a picture of the ancient Roman. Chitta Ranjan Das was the son of a Calcutta solicitor who was one of the pillars of the small but influential Brahmo Somaj community; in other words he was not an orthodox Hindu. Like so many Bengalis, he adopted the profession of advocacy. He came to London, was called to the Bar after an unsuccessful attempt to enter the Indian Civil Service, and on his return to Calcutta soon built up a lucrative practice. Suddenly, in 1919, he threw up all his prospects of professional advancement and plunged into politics. Young Bengal at once accepted him as its leader, and he became a power in the Congress movement. In the course of his presidential address at the Gaya Congress in 1922 he revealed his

political views. He declared his firm conviction that parliamentary government was not government by the people and for the people. 'If to-day the British Parliament were to grant provincial autonomy with responsibility in the central government, I for one would protest against it, because it would lead inevitably to the concentration of power in the hands of the middle class.' In the organization of village life and the practical autonomy of small local centres, there lay, in his view, the only method of preventing the conversion of India into a bad imitation of Europe. 'We ask that you do not school us in a highly centralized form of parliamentary rule,' he said subsequently; 'this would break down when you left us, for it is against the economic, social, and religious nature of India.' At the same time he disavowed any sort of sympathy with the communistic doctrines which are now being openly advocated by the younger Nehru. But while his hostility to Marxism may be accepted, it was undeniable that he maintained close and constant connexion with the revolutionary and terrorist section. They had been and still were his clients, he said. His qualities were those of an American political 'boss', and while condemning western political institutions, he employed every artifice known to Tammany Hall to wreck the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. His ingenuity in this direction found ample scope in the second Bengal legislature which assembled in 1924. He succeeded, with the help of Pandit Motilal Nehru, in persuading the Congress to substitute for the boycott of the legislatures the policy of obstruction from within. He did not command a majority—the Swarajists contributed only 47 to a total of 144—but he was able to secure the rejection of important budget votes, and to make the position of Ministers untenable. The result was that the Bengal Government took over

the administration of Ministers' departments; and the Swarajists withdrew from the Legislative Council. It is significant that shortly before his death Das was endeavouring to negotiate a *modus vivendi* with the Government.

The next group of leaders belong to the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. They are all Kashmiri Brahmins, and members of the legal profession.

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, K.C.S.I., LL.D. (born 1875), is the only one of them who has had experience of responsible office. He was a member of Lord Southborough's Franchise Committee in 1918–19, and Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council from 1920 to 1923, when he resigned and resumed his extensive practice at the Allahabad Bar. In common with most Indian politicians, he has been actively associated with the Congress movement and was a member of the All-India Committee of that body from 1906 until 1917, when he seceded and helped to form the All-India Liberal Federation, presiding over its Poona session in 1923. More recently he played an important part at the sessions of the Round Table Conference. It is difficult to gauge the exact extent of his influence with the 'politically-minded' class in India. While he openly, and no doubt sincerely, expresses his abhorrence of terrorism and subversive agitation, he has not found himself able to support as openly the defensive measures to which the Government of India has been compelled to resort in order to restore law and order. Upon more than one occasion he has exhorted the Viceroy and the Secretary of State to come to terms with the Congress; he was one of the signatories of the Nehru Report which endeavoured to nullify the work of the Simon Commission by drawing up a rival constitution; and he had much to do with the pact of 1931 between

Lord Irwin and Mr. Gandhi. It has been said of him that he is a Hindu incarnation of John Stuart Mill, and that his mind is saturated with the writings of that philosopher.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya (born 1861) represents a very different school of thought. Small in stature and spare in figure, he is the Hot Gospeller of ultra-orthodox Hinduism and the mainstay of the Mahasabha (great society), its principal organization. There must, he holds, be no compromise with Islam. India is Hindu India, and the Brahmins, who are the natural leaders of Hinduism, must be supreme. Such are the doctrines which he proclaims with passionate conviction; and as he is 'a bonnie fechter' with words, he revels in opposition. He has twice been president of the Congress, in 1909 and in 1918, and has remained faithful to that body. The Benares Hindu University finds an enthusiastic supporter in him; he has been its Vice-Chancellor since 1919, and has had much to do with its development. His political views are so deeply coloured by his attachment to Hinduism that it is not easy to define them. But, in so far as he accepts the overlordship of any one, he must be ranged under the banner of Mr. Gandhi, although many of Mr. Gandhi's opinions on the future of Hinduism cannot be shared by him. He is one of the most interesting, as he is one of the most intractable, figures on the Indian political stage.

The two Nehrus are in some respects strangely unlike. Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru (born 1893), the younger, is a pure product of the West. Educated at Harrow and Oxford, he proclaims himself a communist and has been described as a Trotsky with an Oxford voice, ascetic appearance, and perfect manners. There is nothing original in his ideas, which he professedly borrows from Moscow, but there is much in them which is fundamentally

opposed to the religious structure and social conventions of Hinduism. He preaches a 'Peasants' Republic' and advocates the confiscation of all large estates. His conception of *swaraj* is a form of government in which there will be no room for 'capitalists and other well-to-do persons'. While the peasantry have not, as a whole, reacted to these doctrines, even when tempted by an invitation to pay no rent, the younger Nehru has undoubtedly captured the ear of 'Young India', and, as matters stand, has been proving a formidable rival to Mr. Gandhi.

Pandit Moti Lal Nehru (1861–1931), his father, was, on the other hand, entirely educated in India. He was a man of extremely attractive personality. Strikingly handsome—as men of his caste so frequently are—and endowed with a dignified presence and courtly manners, he never lost the esteem of the British officials whom he laboured so assiduously to embarrass. Sir Harcourt Butler describes him in his *India Insistent* (1931) as 'a great gentleman and a loyal friend whom I shall always bear in affectionate remembrance, while lamenting his political apostasy'. In his early days he lived upon the most friendly terms with the English community and adopted English dress and English modes of life. He was always a supporter of the Congress movement; but exhibited no sign of the ultra-nationalist temper of his later years until the troubles in the Punjab in 1919, in consequence of which he avowed himself an extremist and a supporter of the non-co-operation campaign. He gave up his extensive practice at the Bar, discarded his European clothes and methods of life, turned his palatial home into a Congress headquarters, and adopted the asceticism of Mr. Gandhi. In 1919 he accepted the office of president of the Congress, which had now become definitely extremist, and was

instrumental in persuading that body to reject the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms and to boycott the new legislatures. A period of imprisonment followed for taking part in an unlawful assembly. After his release in 1922 he came under the influence of Mr. C. R. Das, and, in opposition to Mr. Gandhi, went so far back upon his former attitude of uncompromising hostility as to accept election, at the close of 1923, to the second Legislative Assembly. On the death of Mr. Das in 1925 he succeeded him as chairman of the All-India Swaraj party, which had been formed as a separate organization, but quickly brought it into the Congress fold. In the Assembly he dominated the Congress party and was acknowledged as its leader—playing the part with conspicuous success. He enforced strict discipline, and while taking his share of work on select committees pursued a steady policy of obstruction, holding up and defeating several Government measures. He actively promoted the boycott of the Simon Commission in 1927, and persuaded the Assembly in February 1928 to adopt a resolution of 'no confidence' in the Commission and also to reject the vote for India's share of its expenses. An All-India Parties Conference entrusted him with the task of presiding over a committee which drew up a constitution of its own. The report, which became known as the Nehru report of 1928, is written in faultless English and contains passages which exhibit considerable constructive ability; but its handling of the perennial problems of minorities, defence, and relations with the Indian States failed to secure any degree of general approval, and it was eventually shelved at the Lahore Congress of 1929, when a programme aiming at complete independence was substituted for the policy of full Dominion status which it had advocated. It may be doubted whether Pandit Moti Lal altogether approved

of the inflammatory presidential address in support of this programme which was delivered by his son on that occasion. Nevertheless, he strenuously promoted the campaign of civil disobedience which was started in the spring of 1930: and both he and his son were imprisoned. He was released at the end of six weeks on the ground of ill health, and at once resumed his activities. But he was overtaxing his strength; and early in 1931 he died at Lucknow.

We may now turn to Madras. The Right Hon. V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI, P.C., C.H. (born 1869), who is a Madras Brahmin, succeeded Mr. Gokhale as the head of the Servants of India Society. He is pre-eminently an orator; and his command of the English language is as remarkable as the facility with which he uses it *ex tempore*. He enjoyed the confidence of Mr. Montagu, whom he accompanied during his tour in India in 1918. As a representative of India at the Imperial Peace Conference in 1921 and as a delegate to the League of Nations and the Washington Conference on naval armaments, he has had the fullest opportunities of contact with the statesmen of the West. In 1922, at the request of the Government of India, he undertook a tour of the Dominions in relation to Indians domiciled therein. From 1926 to 1929 he was the first Agent for the Government of India in South Africa. He is the most travelled among Indian public men. With the late Lord Sinha, he enjoys the distinction of being an honorary freeman of the City of London; and was sworn of the Privy Council in the same year (1921). Of late years his voice has not been conspicuously heard, but he was a member of the 1930–1 Round Table Conferences and is known to have exercised considerable influence in guiding the course of the proceedings.

The agelong antagonism between Hindu and Muslim,

which agitates Upper India, hardly exists in Madras, where the main cleavage is between the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins. The latter have formed themselves into the Justice party, previously mentioned in Chapter VI on communalism, and their leader is Rao Bahadur Sir Annepu Parasuramdas Patro (born 1876), who has been a member of the Madras legislative council since 1920. He was educated at the Madras Christian College. The Justice party is essentially a democratic party, and aims, in the words of Sir A. P. Patro himself, at 'destroying slave mentality and unreasoning submission to the priestly class'. The work was begun in the village, and a new and real interest in public affairs has been created among the agricultural classes and the Indian Christian community, which is particularly strong in Madras. No better leader could be found than Sir A. P. Patro; but if Orissa is constituted as a separate province Madras may lose him, for he is a native of Ganjam, one of the Uriya districts at present attached to that Presidency. He was Minister for Education and Excise from 1921 to 1927, and is distinguished for genuine constructive capacity.

Lala Lajpat Rai (1865–1928) belonged to the Punjab. He passed through many phases during his career, and his unusual susceptibility to his environment led him in his later years into rapid changes of political thought which baffle explanation. But up to a certain point his energies were devoted to the furtherance of education and social and religious reform; and while engaged in these activities he pursued an entirely consistent policy. A Vaisya by caste, he was the architect of his own fortune. Obtaining a scholarship at the Government College, Lahore, he joined the legal profession as a pleader, and in 1892 established himself in considerable practice at Lahore. As a boy of fourteen he came under the influence

of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, a Hindu from Kathiawar, who was the apostle of a deistic creed based on the infallibility of the four Vedas (sacred Hindu books). This movement, known as the Arya Samaj, claimed him as an enthusiastic disciple, and for several years he was actively engaged in promoting its educational and philanthropic activities. In 1905 he came to England with Mr. Gokhale as a delegate from the Congress and attracted some attention by advancing the view, which was novel at the time, that Indian nationalists should hold aloof from all English political parties. But it was not until the spring of 1907 that he came into prominence as a political leader. A violent agitation over certain legislation connected with the Punjab canal colonies led to serious rioting in Lahore and Rawal Pindi, and Lajpat Rai and a young Sikh, Ajit Singh, were arrested and deported to Mandalay under the provisions of a Regulation of 1818. The step was severely criticized by a number of Liberal and Labour members of Parliament, and at the end of six months their release was ordered by Lord Morley, who openly avowed his dislike of 'this rusty sword'.

After his release, certain newspapers incautiously charged him with treasonable communication with the Ameer of Afghanistan, and in 1909 and 1910 he obtained damages against two of them. He was now at the height of his popularity; but found it advisable to reside in the United States until 1919. While in America he published a book, *Young India*, which was proscribed both in India and in England, on the ground, as stated in the House of Commons, that it contained 'language regarding British rule in India which is indistinguishable from that found in enemy propaganda'. On his return to India he presided over the Calcutta Congress of 1920, at which the non-co-operation campaign was inaugurated. His own

attitude was not so pronounced. He even went so far as to publish a book in which he attacked Mr. Gandhi's ideas of unworldliness and avoidance of the western taint. In 1921 and 1922 he underwent two terms of imprisonment for contravention of the Seditious Meetings Act. After his release, in August 1923, he was elected to the central Legislative Assembly and, dissociating himself from the wrecking tactics of the Swaraj party, formed a new nationalist party. In March 1928 he moved, and carried by a small majority, a resolution that the Simon Commission should be boycotted, and he headed a hostile procession on the arrival of the Commission at Lahore on 30 October. The procession was dispersed by the police, and he received some injuries. It was widely asserted that these injuries caused his death on 17 November, but it was shown that the charge was unfounded. In his last articles in the Lahore *People* he declared that he could not remain silent when responsible Indians indulged in such childish talk as a severance of the British connexion. Lajpat Rai was a vigorous champion of communalism. With Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya he founded the Hindu Mahasabha, to defend the interests of the Hindu community against Muslim aggression. At the same time, he placed upon the shoulders of British officials the blame for the increase of communal feeling.

The most prominent figure among Muhammadan political leaders is His Highness the AGA KHAN, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O. (born 1875). To Englishmen he is best known as a popular and much respected owner of race-horses. In India he plays a multiplicity of parts. Although he owns no territory, he enjoys the rank of a first-class Chief and is entitled to a salute of eleven guns. As the spiritual head of the Ismaili Muhammadans, he commands the unquestioning obedience of vast numbers of

followers in East Africa, on the Indian frontier, and in Western India, many of whom are prosperous business men. He is recognized as the mouthpiece of Islam in India and as the champion of its political rights. His services in the last capacity have been invaluable. Always far-sighted, always cautious, and always wise, he has never countenanced such excesses as those of the Ali brothers (of whom some account is given below); and if to-day the claims of the Indian Muslims are recognized, it is in a very large measure due to his competent leadership.

Maulana MUHAMAD ALI (1878–1931) and his surviving brother SHAUKAT ALI (born 1873) were products of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh (now the Muslim University). They were the sons of a small landowner in the Rampur State in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. Muhamad Ali, after completing his studies at Aligarh in 1898, matriculated at Lincoln College, Oxford, and competed unsuccessfully for the Indian Civil Service. Returning to India in 1902, he was for some time in the service of the Nawab of Rampur and also of the Baroda State; but in 1907 he took to journalism and established and edited *The Comrade*, a Muslim weekly written in English and published first at Calcutta and then at Delhi. He held very strongly that the defeat and territorial losses of the Turks in the Italian and Balkan Wars were of paramount importance to the Muslims of India; and he incessantly preached this gospel. On the entry of Turkey into the Great War on the side of Germany, it was found necessary to intern him and his brother and to suppress *The Comrade* on the ground that they had 'freely expressed and promoted sympathy with the King's enemies'. They were again imprisoned in 1919, when they represented the unprovoked invasion of India

by the Ameer of Afghanistan, which resulted in the third Afghan War, as a *jehad* or holy war undertaken in defence of Islam, and called upon Indian Muslims to support it by every means in their power. Released at the end of 1919, on the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, they proceeded to deliver fiery speeches at the annual meeting of the Muslim League at Amritsar, in which they exhorted Indian Muslims to 'die for their religion'. In the spring of 1920 Muhamad Ali came to England at the head of a Khilafat deputation to ask for generous terms of peace for Turkey. On his return he became the instrument of inflicting terrible suffering upon thousands of his own followers. Preaching the old Wahabi doctrine that India was a land under infidel rule, in which it was impossible for pious Muslims to live, he promoted the *hijrat* (flight or migration) to Afghanistan, the disastrous results of which have been described in Chapter V. For a short time the Ali brothers worked in harmony with Mr. Gandhi, but the Moplah outbreak on the Malabar coast speedily showed how little substance there was in the alliance. In September 1921 the brothers were again arrested. The patience of the Government of India became exhausted when a resolution was passed at a Khilafat Conference at Karachi, declaring it to be wholly unlawful and contrary to the religion of Islam for any Muslim to enlist or serve in the Indian Army. The behaviour of Muhamad Ali at his trial indicated that his mind was utterly unbalanced. Both he and Shaukat Ali were ordered to undergo imprisonment for two years. A resolution was moved in the Legislative Assembly at Delhi asking for their release; but so damaging a revelation of their activities was made by Sir William Vincent, the Home Member, that the motion was not persisted in. A little later the Khilafat agitation came to an end owing

to the action of the Turks themselves in depriving the Sultan of his spiritual headship over Islam, and the Ali brothers, on emerging from prison, allied themselves with the more sober section of Muslim opinion which follows the Aga Khan. An invitation to attend the first Round Table Conference was accepted by Muhamad Ali, but he was in failing health and died in London in January 1931.

The career of Mian Sir MUHAMMAD SHAFI, K.C.S.I., C.I.E. (1869–1932), was a remarkable one in many respects. Holding an all-abiding belief in the higher destiny of India within the Empire, he was consistent in his convictions, eminently cautious, and fully conscious of the difficulties which lie in the path of political advance in India. A Punjabi Muhammadan by birth and a native of Lahore, he came to England in his youth and was called to the Bar at the Middle Temple in 1892. He soon attained a leading position at the Lahore Bar, and rapidly assumed a foremost place in the counsels of the Muslim community. A policy of negation and obstruction was always abhorrent to him; and he stoutly resisted the wave of unreasoning fanaticism which was aroused by the agitation of the Ali brothers. In July 1919 he became Education Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council and was instrumental in the creation of several new universities. His sound judgement was of the utmost value during the long period of excitement which followed the defeat of Turkey in the War. He attended two sessions of the Round Table Conference and exercised a salutary influence upon many of the discussions. While he laboured strenuously for the establishment of solidarity, his political outlook was dominated by his view of the danger of any movement which might result in absorption by the Hindu majority, and he never weakened in

his advocacy of communal representation and adequate safeguards for the protection of the minorities. His premature death in January 1932 was a severe loss to his country and the community. His daughter, the Begum Shah Nawaz, was throughout a woman delegate at the Round Table Conferences, and has played a leading part in the women's movement in India.

The Indian political portrait-gallery would not be complete without a brief sketch of BHIMRAO RAMJI AMBEDKAR, PH.D., D.SC. (born 1893), the leader of the depressed classes in Bombay. Dr. Ambedkar is himself an 'untouchable'. His rise is due to the liberality of the Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda, who sent him with a scholarship to prosecute his studies at Columbia University in America, where he graduated. He afterwards did research work in London. He is the Booker T. Washington of India. He has paid more than one visit to the United States, and has made a study of the political methods in the great republic. At the second Round Table Conference he stoutly repudiated Mr. Gandhi's claim to represent general Indian opinion, and made no secret of his view that the 'untouchables' regard the caste Hindu as their implacable enemy. He represented the untouchables in the negotiations of September 1932 which resulted in the Poona agreement with certain Hindu political leaders, after Mr. Gandhi's dramatic intervention had forced the issue of 'untouchability' between the two communities, as described in the final chapter of this volume.

Chapter XI

M. K. GANDHI AS A FACTOR IN INDIAN POLITICS

EARLY LIFE AND SOUTH AFRICA, 1869–1914; THE MAHATMA; PASSIVE RESISTANCE TO CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE, 1917–1922; TOWARDS THE CLAIM TO COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE, 1922–1932.

By F. G. PRATT, C.S.I.

[Mr. F. G. Pratt of the Indian Civil Service served in the Bombay Presidency for thirty-five years. As Commissioner of the Northern Division for ten years, he had special opportunities of gauging the effect of the various movements initiated by Mr. Gandhi in the neighbourhood of his own home.]

MR. GANDHI has told the story of his early life in an autobiography which may stand alongside of Rousseau's *Confessions* for candour of intimate self-revelation. He was born in 1869 at Porbandar, the capital of an Indian State in Kathiawar, of respectable middle-class parents in an orthodox family of Vaishnava Hindus, which for two generations had given Diwans or Prime Ministers to the Porbandar and other neighbouring Indian States. His parents were both deeply religious and his mother, whose saintliness was an abiding memory in her son's life, was much addicted to ritual and penitential fasting.

His early life and education followed the traditional lines of Hindu custom. At the age of thirteen, while still a student at the High School, he was married to a child wife of his own age, and began at once to cohabit with her while still living as a dependant in his father's house. He has noted this interruption of his schooling and deplored the cruelty of the custom.

We find evidence even at this early age of a tender and sensitive conscience, much given to introspection and with

a high ideal of truthfulness. He relates how an adventurous companion had persuaded him that the British owed their strength to a meat diet and that Indians by becoming meat-eaters would be able to shake off their control. For some months he indulged secretly in meat eating and smoking, but the deception of his parents caused him increasing distress, and he gave up both practices for ever.

After his father's death he left his wife and child behind in his mother's house and sailed from Bombay in 1887, to spend the next four years as a student at the Bar in London. Painfully nervous, shy, and tongue-tied, he nevertheless showed unusual courage and self-control, and faithfully kept the vows which his mother had exacted from him, of chastity and of abstinence from meat and from liquor. He lived carefully within his means; spent his spare time in desultory reading of religious books and vegetarian literature; and became a keen propagandist of the fleshless diet which he practised. On returning to India in 1891 he began to practise as a barrister in Bombay, but soon found himself compelled by poverty to return to his native province to work up a local practice.

It was not long before he experienced a shock which altered the whole course of his life. He was persuaded to visit a British official for the purpose of interceding on behalf of his brother, who had somehow got into trouble with the authorities. He admits that he went unwillingly and against his better judgement, but he persisted in continuing to talk and argue after his request had met with a definite refusal. There were probably faults of temper and of judgement on both sides, but when Mr. Gandhi persisted in refusing to take his leave, the British official called in an attendant and had him put out of the office. The young barrister's dignity was cruelly offended, and he was with difficulty persuaded to refrain from instituting legal

proceedings. But he was so chagrined and so disgusted with the conditions of life in Kathiawar that he gladly accepted a commission to proceed to South Africa to take charge of an important suit between two wealthy Indian merchants in Durban and Pretoria.

He landed at Durban in 1893 and found himself in an atmosphere of colour and race prejudice which he had never before experienced. Within a week of his arrival he met with violence and insults. During the whole of his stay in South Africa he devoted much of his leisure to association with his fellow countrymen in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State and to studies of their political, social, and economic conditions. After twelve months' work he had reached Durban on his way back to India, when he learnt of a Bill which was being projected in Natal for the disfranchisement of the Indian community. Its members persuaded him to remain in Africa to watch their interests and guaranteed him a practice in the local courts which would suffice for his maintenance.

This was the beginning of a political career in South Africa which lasted for twenty years. It was a period of apprenticeship and preparation for the work in the wider field of India. It was in South Africa that he perfected the technique of his special methods of political controversy and laid the foundations of his future renown in the dual role of ascetic saint and national champion. He organized and directed an Indian Congress in Natal with its own newspaper for the defence of the political and civic rights of Indians. His persistent advocacy compelled the attention not only of the local government, but also of the Governments in India and Great Britain to the Indian claims and grievances in the matters of franchise and discriminatory taxation. In the local courts of law he was the constant defender of the rights of Indian settlers. With all

this he strove in various ways to increase the self-respect of the Indian community and their consideration among their neighbours. In times of trouble, during and after the Boer War, he persuaded them to come forward as loyal citizens of the Empire and to render service in ambulance battalions. In 1904 he did fine work in organizing relief measures during an epidemic of plague. To these activities he devoted unstintingly his time and most of the earnings of a lucrative professional practice.

His last years in Africa were filled with a struggle against the Transvaal and Union Governments for the repeal of the Asiatic Act, under which Indians were subjected to humiliating restrictions and disabilities. During eight years he organized and led a campaign of passive resistance against the provisions of the Act. He was several times imprisoned, and he taught his followers to welcome and court imprisonment. From this time on, the poor man's champion made the poor man's dress his only wear. Lord Hardinge in a public speech in India in December 1913 avowed his deep and burning sympathy with the Indians in what he regarded as their righteous struggle. In the end, after a mass mobilization of miners on strike to disobey the migration law, the battle was won. The Asiatic Act was repealed on the eve of the Great War, and the tax on Indian labourers was abolished.

The Mahatma

Mr. Gandhi had reached the age of forty-five when his victory in South Africa made him known in three continents. He had by then attained his full development after a long and rigorous self-discipline. To education in the formal sense his debt was small. His habit from quite an early period of his life has been to rely on what he describes as the inner light or the inner vision for the solution

of mental and spiritual problems. His interpretation of his own experiences had led him to identify the inner voice of his subconscious judgement with divine inspiration and guidance, and this manner of thinking has given him a supreme self-confidence which has sometimes been to him a tower of strength and sometimes a snare and a pitfall. He distrusted book knowledge, so his friend Mrs. Polak tells us, and seemed to think that it 'obscured if it did not destroy the capacity to perceive the inner vision.'[1] Of history and economics he has made no serious study. His ideas of history are such as might be derived from the school-books of fifty years ago. 'It is a record', he says, 'of the wars of the world, a record of the interruptions of the course of Nature.'[2]

It was at Pretoria during his first year in Africa that he became immersed in religious studies, and he has gratefully recorded that he was led to them by the example of a little group of Christian evangelists who befriended him on his first arrival and admitted him into their frequent meetings for prayer and discussion. But their hopes of winning him as a convert to Christianity were doomed to frustration. During his stay in Bombay he had fallen under the influence of a learned and devout Hindu, Raychandbhai, who combined an inward life of absorption in holy pursuits with the outward life of a busy merchant prince. This man became Mr. Gandhi's religious guide and teacher and is mentioned by him along with Ruskin and Tolstoy as one of the great formative influences of his life. Under his guidance he studied the Hindu scriptures and the *Bhagwadgita* which afterwards became the main sustenance of his spiritual life. He applied himself to the comparative study of religions. He read Sale's *Koran* and a whole library of books of Christian theology. He was

[1] *Mr. Gandhi—the Man* (1930), p. 30. [2] *Indian Home Rule* (1921), p. 60.

captivated by the teaching of Christ and throughout his life has found inspiration in the Sermon on the Mount; but he could not accept the Christian theology nor the claim of Christianity to be the final revelation of religious truth. He made up his mind that a Hindu must find truth in the heart of the religion of his own country. It was at this early period that he read and was overwhelmingly impressed by Tolstoy's book, *The Kingdom of God is Within You.* In its thesis that the use of violence or force in resistance to evil is contrary to the teaching of Christ he found a restatement of the Hindu doctrine of *Ahimsa* or non-violence, which dominated all his future thought and action. He made an intensive study of Tolstoy and saturated himself with the Tolstoyan ideas and attitude towards life and society. It was in Tolstoy that he found the primitive pre-scientific notions of a state of nature—a Golden Age of simplicity and innocence which was nature's plan for human life. Only by a return to nature with the peasant's simple life of toil and poverty can man find salvation. Modern civilization has gone fatally astray because the complexities which come with man's increasing knowledge and command of natural forces involve a departure from nature's plan. Machines and railways are violations of nature's law, that man should labour with his hands and use his feet for locomotion. Hospitals are at best necessary evils in a society which has forgotten that the healing powers of nature are the true remedy for all diseases. He cannot think of man's mind with its inventions and its conquests as itself a part of nature. For his mind is of the protomedieval type, to which knowledge is in a sense forbidden fruit and science is still a closed book. He took over also the Tolstoyan attitude towards the established Government and its institutions—its law courts and judges and armies and police. These were not required under the

communistic conditions of the Golden Age and are now the vicious accompaniments of a corrupted social system. To the ardent nationalist in Mr. Gandhi these conclusions seemed self-evident truths when applied to the alien Government of his own country.

As the burden of his public work increased, he developed the conviction that a life of public service demands complete renunciation of all sensuous gratification. He stripped himself of superfluities and made it his ideal to live 'like a bare spirit in its low prison of flesh'. At the age of 37, after long searchings of conscience he finally bound himself to lifelong celibacy. He developed by his austerities a strength of will and a power of self-control and self-possession which in his political life enabled him often to dominate the counsels of men to whom he was intellectually inferior. He worked out for himself a philosophy of life in which truth is the supreme good, of which all other forms of good are emanations, and his search for truth led him to a pure and lofty idealism which eschews violence and hatred and makes love and non-violence the laws of conduct.

These ideals were realized in his domestic and personal life, which for many years past has been merged in that of the social settlements which he founded at Phoenix and Tolstoy farms in Africa and at Sabarmati in India. In these he endeavoured to recapture the primitive and communal simplicity of the Golden Age, and in these he has been surrounded by the love and admiration of all sorts and conditions of men and women, his associates and fellow workers.

His public character is now and will remain a matter of endless controversy between the two extremes of enthusiastic praise and wholesale condemnation. Even his admirers have been perplexed by radical inconsistencies

in his thought and action. The teacher of non-violence became a recruiting officer and complained that his people had been deprived of the weapons of war. He seems to be an amalgam of several distinct elements which coexist on separate planes and have never grown together into one consistent whole—the mystic and the nationalist—the champion of freedom and the dictator—the devotee of truth and the political propagandist—the social reformer and the Hindu patriot. It became his ruling passion to deliver his country from modern civilization and towards that end the first step was to get rid of British rule. He came to think of it as having been from first to last an unmixed evil.

Passive Resistance to Civil Disobedience

After his return to India in 1915 Mr. Gandhi established his settlement near Ahmadabad as a seminary for the propagation of his social and political ideas. He had promised Gokhale that he would spend a year in travel and observation before beginning to take any active part in politics. But even in this first year he began to be embarrassed by the homage of enthusiastic crowds. Before two years had passed Vishnuland had recognized another Avatar and the title of Mahatma, or Great Soul, came into general use.

He began his Indian political career with the firm belief founded on his South African experience that in his new weapon of *satyagraha*, truth-force or soul-force or passive resistance—the word is packed with many meanings—he had a talisman with power to solve every difficulty and redress every grievance. He proclaimed the new evangel with apostolic fervour. 'Satyagraha has presented the rising generation with a new hope, an open road and an infallible remedy for most ills of life. It has armed that

generation with an indestructible and matchless force which any one may wield with impunity.'

He began by pushing at doors which were already half open. The abolition of the system of indentured labour was part of the settled policy of Government and was put into effect in 1917 a few months after Mr. Gandhi began to demand it from public platforms. He then took up the grievances of tenants in the North Bihar district of Champaran, where the collapse of the indigo industry had led to agrarian disputes. In the end a compromise was reached and embodied in legislation.

In the following year Mr. Gandhi turned his attention to the Kaira district in his own province of Gujarat. There had been a partial failure of the rains over the whole district, and in accordance with the existing law and custom the revenue authorities had made estimates of the out-turn of the crops for the purpose of determining the degree of relief to be allowed to the cultivators. Political organizations headed by Mr. Gandhi challenged the estimates as harsh and the relief as inadequate. The real difficulty here was to get any agreed basis of admitted facts to which principles of settlement could be applied. There were honest but wide differences of opinion on both sides, which could not be reconciled. To Mr. Gandhi it was as 'clear as daylight' that the Government were harsh and tyrannical, and he encouraged the peasants to enter on a campaign of resistance. The struggle dragged on for several months, but ended in the recovery of practically the full demand which had been billed for collection. Passive resistance in this case failed to attain its avowed ends, but the novelty of the experiment, conducted as it was under the concentrated limelight of the Bombay press, gave an immense advertisement to Mr. Gandhi and his teaching.

A few months later, after attending a war conference at Delhi, he returned to Kaira in the very different role of recruiting agent preaching co-operation with Government in the conduct of the War. He was received without enthusiasm and had little or no success. But in the meantime events were leading to a controversy which for the first time brought him to the centre of the All-India stage.

The methods of the revolutionary party in Northern and Eastern India had brought about a series of outrages and terrorism which had caused serious concern to the Government of India and to the local governments of the provinces directly affected. In accordance with the advice of a Committee presided over by Mr. Justice Rowlatt, legislation was introduced and passed giving the executive special powers to deal with the terrorist menace. All political parties in India united in opposition to these measures, and in February 1919 Mr. Gandhi published a manifesto solemnly affirming that in the event of 'these Bills becoming law and until they are withdrawn we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and such other laws as a Committee to be hereafter appointed may think fit, and we further affirm that in this struggle we will faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person, or property'. An agitation ensued which reached the extreme limits of violent and unscrupulous misrepresentation. When public excitement was at its highest Mr. Gandhi proclaimed an All-India *hartal* or closure of shops and general cessation of business in token of public mourning. Violent disorders broke out simultaneously in some of the great cities and at Amritsar led up to the tragedy of the Jallianwala Bagh.

Mr. Gandhi was profoundly shocked. He imposed on himself a penitential fast and suspended his programme, publicly confessing that his call for civil disobedience had been due to a 'Himalayan' miscalculation of the moral

standards of the masses to whom he had made his appeal. He announced a new programme of moral propaganda for educating the public and making them fit for the practice of non-violence. A series of moral and educative leaflets was issued in Bombay, but excited little interest, and he soon began to publish two newspapers at Ahmadabad in English and in Gujarati, *Young India* and *Navajivan*, as vehicles of political propaganda combined with moral instruction as to non-violence in all its varied aspects.

In December 1919 he welcomed with enthusiasm the Royal Proclamation which announced the Royal Assent to the Government's Reforms Act of 1919.

> 'The Proclamation gives one an insight into the true British character. For as the Proclamation shows it at its best, General Dyer's inhumanity shows it at its worst. . . . The Reforms Act coupled with the Proclamation is an earnest of the intention of the British people to do justice to India, and it ought to remove suspicion on that score. . . . Our duty, therefore, is not to subject the Reforms to carping criticism but to settle down quietly to work so as to make them a success.'[1]

He expressed the same views publicly at the Amritsar Congress of December 1919. Unfortunately, however, they underwent a rapid change.

His newspapers, which give a complete reflection of his mind during the next three years, were concerned almost exclusively with three main subjects, the repeal of the Rowlatt Act, the Punjab wrongs, and the Khilafat grievance. Mr. Gandhi had persuaded himself that as a true friend of the Muslims he must take up their cause. It was not for him to enter into the absolute merits of the case provided there was nothing immoral in their demands. The Muslim leaders, in return for a profession of allegiance to the Satyagraha principle, received the support of Mr. Gandhi's press and organizations. A Hindu-Muslim

[1] *Young India*, 31 Dec. 1919.

entente was duly established, and the year 1920 saw Mr. Gandhi raised to the unique position of chosen leader and spokesman of both communities. The Khilafat agitation proceeded with redoubled vehemence, and the publication of the Turkish peace treaty in 1920 was made the occasion for the inauguration of a campaign of non-co-operation against the Government.

Agitation against the Punjab grievances led to a similar conclusion. Mr. Gandhi had begun by advocating the peaceful acceptance of imprisonment and suffering as a patriotic discipline, but the public were in no mood to listen to such teaching. Excitement and indignation were growing with the increasing rumours of excesses of martial law administration in the Punjab; and after the publication of the official and non-official reports and the final orders of the Secretary of State, Mr. Gandhi identified himself with extreme demands for the recall of the Viceroy and the dismissal of a large number of Punjab officials from the Lieutenant-Governor downwards. He condemned the Secretary of State's dispatch as 'thinly disguised official whitewash', and spoke of the report and the dispatches as constituting 'an attempt to condone official lawlessness'.[1] The tone of the debates in Parliament on the events in the Punjab finally shattered his faith in the good will and the good faith of the British Government and he announced that India's duty was to withdraw co-operation from a Government which he described as 'satanic'.

He openly avowed that his purpose was revolutionary. 'Non-co-operation,' he said, 'though a religious and strictly moral movement, deliberately aims at the overthrow of the Government.'[2] He had persuaded himself that the movement now involved no danger to the public peace. During the next two years the non-co-operation programme was

[1] *Young India*, 9th June 1920. [2] Ibid., 19 Sept. 1921.

developed and extended with the utmost vigour and was carried from the towns into the villages by organized bodies of Hindu and Muhammadan volunteers. There was always a protesting minority, and it included some of the most distinguished of Mr. Gandhi's contemporaries in Indian public life. Mr. Sastri impeached the revolutionary programme which had been substituted for the ideals of Ranade and Mehta and Gokhale. In Bengal a brilliant group of publicists, while professing the greatest respect and admiration for Mr. Gandhi's character, attacked the policy as completely out of touch with reality. It was rejected by Rabindranath Tagore.

But no criticism could shake the self-confidence of the popular idol. Item by item was added to the programme until in its final form it included boycott of all Government service both civil and military, boycott of Government schools and colleges, and finally a refusal to pay taxes. All this was formally approved by the National Congress, which by the end of 1920 had come completely under Mr. Gandhi's influence. Self-government was declared to be its object, and the Congress constitution was revised by a resolution which cut away from the old formula every word which implied the continued connexion of India with the British Empire. Public feeling was inflamed by a press and platform campaign of vehement denunciation of Government. Family life was disorganized by the emptying of schools and colleges. Trade was dislocated by frequent processions and mass meetings, and by the announcement of *hartal* days when all shops and businesses were expected to shut down in token of public mourning. The bazaars were thrown into confusion and turmoil by disorderly picketing of shops.

Simultaneously Mr. Gandhi launched an economic programme upon which he insisted with passionate enthusiasm

as the only path to India's political salvation. The poverty of India must be cured by the spinning-wheel and hand-loom in every peasant's cottage. India must grow rich by producing her own clothing and by ceasing to be exploited by foreign imports. Liquor was another cause not only of poverty but of moral degradation. These lessons must be brought home by intensive picketing of cloth and liquor shops and by bonfires of foreign cloth. Dissentients were coerced by threats of social boycott applied by the caste organizations. The Khilafat agitation grew steadily more violent and dangerous, and the frightful climax was soon reached of the Moplah rebellion in Southern India when Muhammadan fanaticism ran amuck in orgies of savage atrocities inflicted on the Hindu population. Mr. Gandhi regarded the Moplah rebellion as an irrelevant episode which should not interfere with his plans for the revival of mass civil disobedience. During all this troubled period, his fanatical conviction of the complete peacefulness and self-control of his followers remained unshaken. His exhortations never ceased that they should under all provocation maintain that attitude, but the violence of his own language was all the time sapping respect for any form of authority. It seemed to be an article of faith with him that breaches of the peace could be due to one cause only—the violence of the 'satanic' Government.

It is possible that the wide popularity and circulation of his newspapers had hypnotized him into the belief that his moral teaching was making rapid headway. Less than a year after the first publication of *Young India* he was writing of 'the wonderfully quick acceptance by the people of the principle of Satyagraha—the hold that Satyagraha has gained on the people in curbing the forces of disorder and violence'.[1] He began to announce the near approach

[1] *Young India*, 9 June 1920.

of Swaraj in the hope of stimulating efforts for the fulfilment of his programme of social and economic reforms, the complete exclusion of foreign cloth, and the abolition of untouchability. Public excitement was raised to fever heat by definite promises of Swaraj on specified dates.

The arrival of the Prince of Wales in November 1921 was made the occasion of fresh controversy. It was described as an 'unbearable provocation to the people of India who did not want to see the representative of a system of which she is sick to death'.[1] The Prince's visit to Bombay was marred by serious rioting and bloodshed, of which Mr. Gandhi was the horrified eyewitness. He declared with sorrow that the non-violent atmosphere did not exist and that all hopes of civil disobedience had been dashed in pieces—'Even if Bardoli were non-violent it would be impossible to ignore Bombay.'[2] Within a fortnight all this had been forgotten and he was in Bardoli encouraging the local people to look forward to the privilege of 'battling with the Government'.

By December 1921 Lord Reading's Government after long forbearance had decided in the interests of public safety to take measures for putting a curb on inflammatory speeches and on the unlawful activities of volunteer associations. At the same time a group of prominent moderate leaders tried to act as mediators by bringing Mr. Gandhi into personal conference with Lord Reading. Negotiations were protracted for two months, but broke down completely owing to Mr. Gandhi's intransigence. His minimum demand was that Government should abandon all their precautionary measures, release all prisoners, guarantee non-interference with all non-co-operation activities, while Mr. Gandhi himself should have the uncontrolled right to continue his preparations for civil disobedience.

[1] *Young India*, 24 November 1921. [2] Ibid.

The Ahmadabad meeting of the National Congress followed in the end of December 1921; it authorized the organization of mass civil disobedience and gave Mr. Gandhi dictatorial powers as the sole executive agent of the Congress. Mr. Gandhi in his newspaper declared, 'we have dared openly to desire and prepare the end of the existing system of Government and have challenged the administration to do their worst'. Sir Sankaran Nair, who presided over the last of the conferences in January 1922, gave up the task in despair and published a book identifying Gandhi and Gandhism with anarchy.

Mr. Gandhi returned to his chosen battle-ground at Bardoli and wrote an ultimatum to the Viceroy announcing that the revolution would begin in a week's time, failing prior concession of all his demands. At this moment the whole of India was shocked by another ghastly tragedy in which a mob of rioters in a village of the United Provinces massacred and burnt twenty-one policemen and watchmen. Yet another time Mr. Gandhi repented and suspended the programme of mass civil disobedience, and again after a brief interval he resumed his subversive press campaign. Further forbearance was deemed impossible. He was brought to trial, convicted of sedition, and sentenced to six years' imprisonment on the 18th of March 1922.

Towards the Claim of Complete Independence

In April 1924 Mr. Gandhi became dangerously ill, but his life was saved by the skill of the English civil surgeon, Colonel Maddock, who successfully operated for appendicitis. The remainder of his sentence was remitted, and he was unconditionally released. He then found himself in isolation in a changed political world. The old war-cries of the Punjab and the Khilafat were obsolete. The

Rowlatt Act had been repealed. The boycott of Government schools had collapsed. The Hindu-Muslim *entente* had broken down and had been replaced by jealous rivalry which repeatedly led to furious rioting and bloodshed. One such outbreak occurred at Kohat soon after his release, and Mr. Gandhi fasted for twenty-one days in the vain hope that his expiatory sufferings would be the cement to unite the warring communities. Worst of all, the non-co-operation programme was discredited. The Swaraj party under new leaders had given up the plan of boycott of the legislatures and had entrenched themselves strongly in the legislatures all over India. Mr. Gandhi fought hard for the restoration of the old programme, but at the end of 1924 he publicly confessed in the Congress that he had been defeated. 'The intellect of the country', he said, 'seems to be ranged against my ways of thought and action.' The most he could secure was endorsement of the three main planks of his non-political constructive programme—Hindu-Muslim unity, the removal of untouchability, and the spread of the spinning-wheel and indigenous cloth. For the next three and a half years he kept aloof from politics and devoted himself entirely to work and propaganda for his constructive programme.

The appointment of the Statutory (Simon) Commission in November 1927 opened a new chapter of India's history, which soon resulted in his being drawn back into active political life. A storm of protest was raised against the constitution of the Commission, and the National Congress at Madras in 1927 passed a resolution declaring the goal of the Indian people to be complete national independence. The following year saw the publication of a constructive effort of Indian statesmanship, the Motilal Nehru report, which made Dominion status the basis of the new Indian constitution. In the resulting discussions, there was sharp

dissension between the older swarajists who followed Pandit Motilal and the younger and more extreme politicians who would be satisfied with nothing short of complete independence. The younger men were led by Motilal's son Pandit Jawaharlal, a communist whose education had been completed in Soviet Russia. Mr. Gandhi came in as a mediator to prevent the disaster of an open split in the Congress, and under his inspiration a compromise formula was adopted at Calcutta in December 1928. It was resolved to stand by the previous resolution for complete independence, but in the meantime to adopt the Motilal Nehru constitution, subject to the proviso that, if the British Parliament failed to adopt that constitution for India by the end of 1929, the Congress would revive the policy of non-co-operation.

The year 1929 was marked by frequent and prolonged rioting of extreme violence due to Hindu-Muslim strife complicated by industrial disputes in Bombay. Mr. Gandhi continued to press for the whole non-co-operation programme, but with all his efforts he could not persuade the swarajists to withdraw from the legislatures. In November 1929 Lord Irwin returned to India from consultations with His Majesty's Government in London, and announced that he had been authorized to state clearly that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress as contemplated in the declaration of August 1917 is the attainment of Dominion status. This elicited an immediate reply signed by thirty Indian leaders, including Mr. Gandhi, 'appreciating the sincerity of the declaration and the desire of the British Government to placate Indian opinion' and asking for an early conference for the purpose of securing the co-operation of the principal political organizations. The Viceroy entered into conference with a small group including Mr. Gandhi, but no conclusion

could be reached, for he was faced with a demand which it was impossible to accept, that a Round Table Conference should be convened in London with an express mandate to draft a plan of immediate Dominion status to which the subsequent support of His Majesty's Government should be guaranteed. Mr. Gandhi's intransigence again wrecked all hope of negotiation. He put forward as the price of peace a long list of immediate demands which included total prohibition of liquor and 50 per cent. reductions in army expenditure, land revenue, and service salaries; and then went on to the Congress at Lahore in December 1929 and carried a resolution declaring complete independence to be the national goal and authorizing immediate preparations for civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes. In March of the following year he sent an ultimatum to the Viceroy announcing his intention to run the 'mad risk' of a campaign of civil disobedience since it was 'as clear as daylight' that there was no intention on the part of the British Government to desist from the exploitation of India. The laws first selected for disobedience were the salt laws; and the campaign started with Mr. Gandhi's carefully staged and advertised march to the sea, where he duly defied the Government by committing a technical breach of the law. He then published a manifesto authorizing mass civil disobedience to the salt laws. Women began to be enlisted in increasing numbers for the plan of campaign, and general disorder soon followed with organized raids on Government salt depots. Serious rioting broke out in centres as far apart as Calcutta, Karachi, and Peshawar—where it was found that the Congress Committee had called in trans-border tribesmen to attack the city.

The wheel had come round full circle. It seemed impossible to leave the arch-revolutionary uncontrolled. He

was arrested in May 1930 and interned under the provisions of the Bombay State Prisoners Regulation of 1827. Simultaneously ordinances were issued by the Viceroy for the more stringent control of the press and providing penalties for picketing and for instigation to refusal of payment of taxes. Mr. Gandhi remained in jail, but his followers carried on the war outside.

Volunteers were attracted in large numbers, especially in the cities, by the offer of daily wages and free food to carry out the plans of boycott, picketing, and civil disobedience. These were applied not only to foreign goods and liquor shops, but to every possible form of Government activity, to schools and law courts and public offices, to polling booths, to the movements of traffic and the touring of officers. The police were harassed by social boycott; peasants were persuaded to refuse to pay land revenue; state forests were raided and plundered by riotous mobs. One forest riot ended in the death of a local official and the murder of two police constables. In Bombay city lawless picketing and frequent mob violence led to serious paralysis of the trade and industry of the city. At Sholapur and at Peshawar rioting became so serious that order could only be restored by martial law. By the end of October there were 23,000 persons in prison for political offences. It is true that of the thousands engaged in Satyagraha only a very small proportion transgressed into violence; but their deliberate object was the paralysis of authority and the overthrow of the Government, and their conduct led to disorder and anarchy in 1930 as inevitably as it did in 1919.

Meantime Mr. Gandhi, though interned, was still politically active. He was allowed to receive visitors and journalists, and frequent efforts were made by Indian leaders to obtain his agreement to peace terms of which it might be possible to secure the Viceroy's acceptance.

On the 27th of January 1931 he was released from jail. The first Round Table Conference had been held in London, and it was hoped that the returning Indian leaders might succeed in persuading Mr. Gandhi and the Congress to respond to Lord Irwin's public appeal for their co-operation. Mr. Gandhi's first response was to issue a manifesto which was in effect a repetition of the demands of his previous ultimatum as the condition for the cessation of civil disobedience.

After much discussion with the returned Indian leaders, he was at last brought to consent to ask Lord Irwin for an interview and there began a long series of conversations. Mr. Gandhi insisted on a roving commission of inquiry into the conduct of the police, but this was absolutely refused by Lord Irwin, and finally a settlement was reached at Delhi in the first week of March 1931, the main points of which were: that Government would (1) withdraw the ordinances and all pending prosecutions; (2) release all political offenders who had not been guilty of acts of violence; (3) restore all forfeited property which had not already been sold to third parties; (4) make some slight concessions in the administration of the salt laws in coastal tracts; and (5) withdraw the ban on picketing except in so far as it might imply political propaganda or entail risk of violence. On their side, Mr. Gandhi and the Congress would drop civil disobedience and the demand for the general repeal of the Salt Act and would participate in the next Round Table Conference for the constitutional progress of India. At the end of April Lord Irwin was succeeded in the Viceroyalty by Lord Willingdon, but even before Lord Irwin's departure Mr. Gandhi had already begun to talk of the possibility of going back to civil disobedience if the terms of the settlement were not carried out to his satisfaction. Nevertheless, he secured the formal

ratification of the Delhi Pact by the Congress held at Karachi in April. It was confidently hoped at that time that these events, coming after twelve months of chaos, would usher in a new era of co-operation for peaceful progress. But the barometer was never steady at set fair. Almost up to the date of his embarkation for London Mr. Gandhi's attitude was constantly in doubt, and he was continuously engaged in controversy, either with the All-India Moslem League on the subject of representation for Muhammadans, or with the Viceroy and the Government of Bombay about grievances and complaints arising out of the detailed implementation of the terms of settlement.

He reached London in September to take part in the second Round Table Conference. He had been given plenary power to select the Congress delegation, and he made himself the sole representative. His attitude and his performances during the Conference were profoundly disappointing to those who had hoped for great results from his commanding personal influence. He failed completely to negotiate a settlement of the controversies which separated him from the representatives of the Muhammadans and the depressed classes. It would not be unfair to say that his idealistic intransigence prevented him from making any constructive contribution at any point to the work of the Conference. Unmoved alike by Mr. Sastri's powerful appeal for peace and co-operation and by the Prime Minister's emphatic assurances of the development of responsible government in a federated India, he returned to India profoundly dissatisfied and distrustful, and his final enigmatic speeches in London seemed to leave it an open question whether on his return to India he would or would not again declare for civil disobedience. While in London he had been gravely perturbed by news of special ordinances against terrorism in Bengal, and on his

way out to India he heard of other ordinances which had been necessitated by events which had been taking place in the United Provinces and in the North West Frontier Province. He arrived back in India on 28 December and communicated with the Viceroy, protesting against these ordinances and suggesting an interview. A correspondence ensued in which the Viceroy took the position that the ordinances were not open to discussion. Mr. Gandhi made it clear that the alternative would be resumption of civil disobedience, and this resumption was immediately followed by his arrest on 4 January 1932 and subsequent internment. In reply to a request from Maulana Shaukat Ali for his release, the Viceroy intimated at the end of October that, so long as Mr. Gandhi did not definitely dissociate himself from civil disobedience, it was not possible to accede to the request.

His action in September 1932 in connexion with the communal award of the British Government in August is related in the final chapter of this volume.

Chapter XII

SUBVERSIVE MOVEMENTS

SEDITION; ANARCHY; TERRORISM; COMMUNISM; RED SHIRT MOVEMENT

By J. CAMPBELL KER, C.S.I., C.I.E., M.P.

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THE Indian Mutiny, which broke out at Meerut in May 1857, although it has of late been described by extremist writers as the first Indian war of independence, was in no sense a national rising, but rather, as its name implies, a mutiny of part of the Indian Army, which developed into an attempt to restore to a Muhammadan dynasty the supremacy it had lost a hundred years before at the battle of Plassey. During the next fifty years after the Mutiny, no attempt was made to overthrow the Government by the use of physical force, although towards the end of that period political agitation began to take a more aggressive form both in the Indian National Congress and outside. In the following pages a necessarily brief account is given of subversive movements in Bombay, Bengal, and the Punjab, and in places outside India before the War; then of the developments which took place during the War; and lastly of the most prominent features of these movements since the War came to an end.

Three things are relevant in considering the relation of these subversive movements to the growth of political thought and activity in India. First, even in highly civilized and homogeneous countries, organized governments have

usually to face the attack of disruptive forces not content with the ordinary avenues of political advance. Secondly, important and menacing as these disruptive forces have been and are in India, the enormous area and populations of the provinces in which they occur must be remembered, as well as the large tracts in which they have made no headway. Finally, the growth of these disruptive forces during the last quarter of a century has coincided with the public discussion in 1909, in 1919, and again at the present day of great schemes of political advance; and the task of maintaining law and order, while simultaneously liberalizing the constitution, is not an easy one.

In 1895 the Indian National Congress were still holding their annual meetings and passing their annual recurring resolutions demanding a greater share in the government and the administration of the country. Dissatisfaction with the rate of progress achieved or attempted by the Congress party began to grow, and many began to favour the adoption of measures which, it was hoped, would produce more speedy results. At this juncture, the foundations of a physical force party were laid in hero-worship and religion by B. G. Tilak, a Brahmin of Poona, who inaugurated in 1895 an annual celebration of the memory of Sivaji, the hero of Maratha history. Sivaji had led his people with success in a rising against their Muhammadan rulers, and it was easy from this text to preach the lesson that the people should now rise against their British rulers, who were described as far more aggressive than the Muhammadans had been, destroying their arts and industries, and draining away the wealth of the country. Tilak also made use of the annual worship of the Hindu god Ganpati, a very popular festival, as an easy means of reaching the masses and of giving to the political movement a religious turn, as was

done later in Bengal in an intensified form. Both the newspapers which he controlled were hostile to the British Government, and missed no opportunity of stirring up ill feeling against it. An outbreak of plague in Poona in 1897 necessitated the disinfection and evacuation of houses and other unpopular measures, against which Tilak directed a very bitter attack. In June the officer in charge of these operations was fatally shot by a Brahmin, and while the agitation against the plague measures was the immediate cause of the murder, it was in part due to the political attack upon Government, which the grievances of the people in connexion with the campaign against plague were used to intensify.

While Tilak was stirring up national feeling in the west of India, a somewhat similar movement was going on in Bengal, but there the religious aspect predominated. The movement received a great impetus from the discontent caused by the partition of Bengal in 1905, and also from the victory of Japan over Russia, which was represented as the turning of the tide of conquest in favour of Asia against Europe. But the strongest appeal was made to religion; and the Bengalis were exhorted to rid their country of the British in the same way as the gods had driven out the demons. The worship of Kali, whose temple of Kalighat gives its name to Calcutta, was identified with the revolutionary movement, and assassination was preached as a holy duty, a sacrifice to the goddess. She is known by many names, sometimes as Shakti, the personification of physical force, sometimes simply as The Mother. The nature of the appeals which were circulated is indicated in the following extract from an article which appeared in a paper called the *Yugantar* of Calcutta on the 30th of May 1908:

'The Mother is thirsty and is pointing out to her sons the only thing that can quench that thirst. Nothing less than human blood and

decapitated human heads will satisfy her. Let her sons, therefore, worship her with these offerings, and let them not shrink even from sacrificing their lives to procure them. On the day on which the Mother is worshipped in this way in every village, on that day will the people of India be inspired with a divine spirit and the crown of independence will fall into their hands.'

The revolutionary party in Bengal first adopted the policy of assassination by means of bombs in the year 1906, and as their early experiments in making them were not a success, they sent one of their number to Paris to learn the art. He returned early in 1908, bringing with him a manual on the subject of bombs and explosives, and the work now proceeded on more efficient lines in a garden at Maniktolla, a suburb of Calcutta. The first of the new bombs was used in April 1908, when two young Bengalis were sent from Calcutta to Muzaffarpur with instructions to kill the District Judge who, as Chief Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta, had convicted the printers and publishers of two Indian newspapers issued by the revolutionaries. By mistake the bomb was thrown into the wrong carriage, and resulted in the death of two English ladies against whom there was no grievance whatever. Two days later the bomb factory in Maniktolla was raided and the leaders arrested. The dangerous character of the conspiracy is indicated by the reprisals taken on persons connected with the case. In August 1908 a member of the gang who had given information was shot dead in Alipore Jail by two of the accused, and in November of the same year the Indian sub-inspector of police who had tried to arrest one of the two bomb-throwers was killed in the streets of Calcutta. While the case was going on, the public prosecutor was assassinated outside the police court of Alipore in February 1909, and a year later a Muhammadan officer of the Bengal police, who had taken a leading

part in the investigation, was shot dead in the High Court of Calcutta.

Although not so spectacular, there were other organizations equally dangerous in Eastern Bengal, the most prominent of which was the Anusilan Samiti (improvement society) of Dacca, founded there about 1906. The premises were searched in 1908, and the documents found showed that while the ostensible object of the society was the improvement of Bengali youth by discipline and physical exercise, its main purpose was to subvert the Government by force. Similar societies were formed at other places in Eastern Bengal, and although they were proscribed by Government as unlawful associations and the members were prosecuted, the outrages perpetrated by them continued until after the outbreak of the Great War, when action was taken against the leaders under the Defence of India Act of 1915.

In the Punjab, as the fiftieth anniversary of the Mutiny, the 10th of May 1907, approached there was everywhere evidence of great political excitement. Discontent and disaffection had been aroused by a set of regulations proposed for the new canal colonies, which while greatly adding to the wealth of the province and its people, were causing an economic upheaval in the lives of large sections of the community. Sedition was being preached in many of the principal towns, Europeans were assaulted in Lahore and Rawal Pindi, and it became clear that unless drastic steps were taken further disturbances were likely to break out at any moment. By the end of April the situation had become dangerous, and all reports indicated that the most influential man associated with the leaders of the movement was Lala Lajpat Rai, and that one of the most violent agitators among the lesser men was a certain Ajit Singh, who had been employed in teaching Hindustani

to British officers. As a preventive measure they were arrested and deported in May, the colony regulations were amended, and serious trouble was averted.

During the next few years, except for the publication of a number of seditious books and pamphlets, there were few outward signs of revolutionary work in the Punjab, and the bomb thrown in December 1912 at the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, as he was entering Delhi in state seated on an elephant, was found to be the work of a Bengali gang. A Bengali was also responsible for placing a bomb in the Lawrence Gardens near the European Club in Lahore in April 1913. The intention evidently was to kill some of the members of the Club, but the actual victim was an unfortunate Indian messenger, who ran over the bomb on his bicycle and was instantly killed. The perpetrator of the outrage was convicted and executed.

Before the War there were also centres of conspiracy against the Government of India in London, Paris, and North America. In London the movement was started in 1905 by Shyamaji Krishnavarma, a native of Kathiawar, who collected a number of discontented Indians and published a highly seditious newspaper called the *Indian Sociologist.* It appeared regularly from 1905 to 1914, but Krishnavarma himself, alarmed by the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai, left London in 1907 for Paris, and continued his paper from that centre. The Society he had formed came under the leadership of one Savarkar of Nasik, who had learnt his political lessons in the Tilak school, having been a member of a society in Nasik which took a prominent part in the Sivaji celebrations. The murder in July 1909 of Sir William Curzon Wyllie, who was shot dead in the Imperial Institute in London, was committed by a Punjabi student who was an associate of Savarkar's group. Savarkar was later found guilty of

instigating the assassination of the District Magistrate of Nasik in December 1909, and was sentenced to transportation for life. With his removal, the society in London ceased to be of any great consequence, and on the outbreak of the Great War it was broken up.

In Paris there was a similar but smaller society of Indians of whom the most prominent was a Parsi lady known as Madame Cama; she produced a paper called the *Bande Mataram*, at first in Paris and afterwards in Geneva, which rivalled the *Indian Sociologist* in the violence of its language, but very little practical work was done by the Paris group, except that they assisted in the purchase of Browning pistols for export to India. It came out in the trial of Savarkar that he had arranged for them to be secretly conveyed to Bombay, and that one of them was used in the Nasik murder.

More important than either the London or the Paris society as a power for evil was the party formed in the United States of America. The first sign of trouble in that quarter appeared in 1906 when Indian workers were forcibly expelled from the mills at Bellingham and other places. They were mostly Sikhs, and from 1907 onwards their grievances were fomented by various agitators, both at meetings and by means of newspapers which were started from time to time. The most important of these papers was the *Ghadr*, begun in November 1913 in San Francisco. The word *Ghadr* means 'mutiny', and the paper appealed to the martial races of India, and particularly to the Sikhs in the Indian Army, and called upon them to rise against the alleged oppression and tyranny of the English. Towards the end of the War, and for some years afterwards, the activities of the Ghadr party in America were suspended, but about 1925 it seems to have gained a new lease of life. The attempt of the Communists to

secure control in China directed their attention to the Sikhs, who are employed there as police and watchmen, and the renewal of the movement in America shows signs of communist influence. Whatever may be the agencies at work, the existence of a revived Ghadr party in America must always be regarded as a potential source of danger to the peace of the Punjab and of India.

During the War efforts were made by the Germans to use the Indian revolutionaries for their own purposes. Elaborate and world-wide plans were devised to land arms in Bengal for the use of the revolutionaries there, and emissaries proceeded between the leaders in India and German representatives in Batavia and elsewhere to complete the arrangements. Money was sent to the conspirators in Calcutta, and the nucleus of a training camp was set up in a remote spot in the jungle. This hiding-place was discovered, and in a fight between the police and a party of Bengalis armed with Mauser pistols, the leader was killed, and the plot collapsed. Another plan, organized with the help of the Ghadr party, was to enter Burma through Siam, and after gaining over the military police to proceed to the conquest of India. As this force consisted mostly of Sikhs and Muhammadans, literature was prepared which was expected to appeal to both; but the plot miscarried because one of the most important emissaries to reach Burma through Siam, instead of being welcomed by the first small body of police he encountered, was promptly arrested and taken before their commanding officer.

The possibilities of the north-west frontier were not neglected, and here the Germans relied on creating disaffection among the Muhammadans in India, who were naturally much perturbed by the entry of Turkey into the War against the Allies. Most Indian Muhammadans then

held the view that the Sultan of Turkey for the time being was the Khalif of Islam, the head of their religion, and a severe strain was put upon their loyalty to a Government that was fighting against the country which they regarded as the bulwark of their faith. The Turks and Germans made the fullest use of these feelings in Persia and Afghanistan, as well as in India, and it became necessary to intern some of the Indian leaders, including Muhamad Ali and Shaukat Ali, and to take proceedings against the more extreme Muhammadan newspapers. In order to cause trouble in Afghanistan, parties of German and Turkish officers, with a few Indian colleagues, were sent to Kabul, but the neutrality of the Ameer Habibullah prevented any overt act during his lifetime, and the effect of these efforts was felt only after his assassination, as will appear later.

Early in the War a serious situation developed in the Punjab, arising out of the return from America of Sikhs who had been demoralized by the teaching of the Ghadr party. During the first three years of the War some 8,000 Sikhs came back from the United States, Canada, and the Far East, and many of them were a considerable embarrassment to the administration. Local committees of loyal Sikhs were formed to advise the Government in the matter, and in about 6,000 cases no action was found to be necessary. The great majority settled down peaceably, but it was necessary to restrict the movements of about 1,500 to their own villages. Several risings were attempted, and efforts were made in two or three instances to seduce the Indian regiments. A large number of dacoities and murders were committed in many of the Punjab districts, and efforts were made to raise a rebellion, but the resolute administration of the province, and the generally loyal attitude of the people, successfully prevented any open outbreak during the War period.

At the end of 1917 a committee was appointed by the Government of India, with Mr. Justice Rowlatt as chairman, to inquire into the disturbed state of the country and to suggest remedies. Their report (Cmd. 9190, 1918) gave a very full account of revolutionary activities, and made recommendations for legislation with the object of enabling Government to retain some of the exceptional powers which they had exercised during the War. Two Bills were accordingly prepared to give effect to these proposals, one of which was never passed, while the other was passed, but never used. The provisions of the latter were grossly misrepresented in the press and in meetings all over India, particularly in the Punjab, and as a protest against it Mr. Gandhi declared a *hartal* or general strike and cessation of work and the breaking of laws, beginning with the Salt Law. The *hartal*, involving the closing of all shops and the stoppage of all business as a sign of mourning, is no new thing in India, but is generally a prelude to disorder. Out of the *hartal* ordered by Mr. Gandhi for the 30th of March 1919 arose a disturbance in Delhi leading to conflicts with the police and the troops which resulted in eight deaths. A second *hartal* was ordered on the 6th of April, and was enforced in Lahore and other Punjab towns by intimidation and mob violence. On the 9th of April Mr. Gandhi attempted to enter the Punjab against the orders of the Punjab Government, but he was stopped at the boundary and asked to go back to Bombay, being told that he would be arrested if he did not do so. He returned to Bombay under protest, free to move about anywhere within the Presidency, but the news was spread that he had been arrested, and the next day the Punjab was in an uproar, and serious riots occurred in Lahore, Amritsar, and other places. Besides Europeans, of whom five were murdered in Amritsar alone, the main objects

of attack were railway stations, lines and bridges, banks, telegraph offices, and post offices. At the same time there was a similar outbreak in Ahmadabad and places in that neighbourhood; the railway was torn up near Nadiad, and the telegraph wires were cut at many points.

In Amritsar itself the situation was so bad that on the 11th of April the civil authorities made over charge to General R. E. Dyer, who had arrived that day to take command of the troops. The action of this officer in dispersing by military force a mob of about 5,000, which had assembled in the Jallianwala Bagh on the 13th of April, was the cause of much resentment in India and the subject in this country of an acute controversy, into the merits of which it is impossible to enter here. The facts are that the meeting was held in defiance of a proclamation that had been widely published in Amritsar, and that General Dyer ordered his small party of 50 rifles to fire without giving any warning, and continued to fire after the crowd had begun to break up, with the result that 379 persons were killed and many more injured. There is no doubt that he acted under a stern sense of duty in the belief that the fate of the Punjab lay in his hands, and that his action had an immediate effect in quelling the uprising both in Amritsar and throughout the Punjab; but it is equally clear that it went beyond the necessity of the case, and that although it was repudiated by higher authority, it created throughout India feelings of bitterness which have not yet been allayed.

On the 15th April 1919 martial law was proclaimed in the affected districts of the Punjab. Within a week order was restored, but it was necessary to continue martial law, particularly over the railways, for some time longer, since the Afghans had begun to move to the attack on the north-west frontier, and the communications in the

Punjab were of vital importance to the defence of India. This attack was due in part to a change of Government in Afghanistan, brought about by the murder of the late Ameer Habibullah, who had been a good friend to the British, in part to German action in Kabul which had now borne fruit when it was too late, and in part to the belief, propagated in Afghanistan and amongst the border tribes by agents from India, that the Punjab was in open rebellion. There can be no doubt that the speedy and complete defeat of the Afghan attack was very largely due to the prompt suppression of the Punjab disturbances.

After helping to allay the storm he had raised, and admitting what he called his 'Himalayan' blunder, Mr. Gandhi concentrated his efforts on non-violence for a time, but soon another interest claimed his attention. The difficult situation created by the Turkish peace settlement among the Muhammadans of India has been described elsewhere in this book, and Mr. Gandhi saw in it, as he said, 'such an opportunity of uniting Hindus and Muhammadans as would not arise in a hundred years'. He hastened to seize it, joining with the Ali brothers and certain other Muslims in what was called the Khilafat movement. He appealed to the Muhammadans by his support of Turkey, and to the Hindus by his demand for the righting of the 'Punjab wrongs', that is to say, the punishment of all those concerned in suppressing the Punjab disturbances. The death of Tilak in August 1920 removed his strongest rival for the Hindu leadership, and early in 1921 the campaign of Mr. Gandhi and the Ali brothers was in full swing; the unity of Hindus and Muhammadans against the Government was preached up and down the country and there was much mob violence. The language used by the leaders increased in boldness until in July, at Karachi, Muhammadan soldiers

were called upon to desert from their regiments; at this stage the Ali brothers were arrested and sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

As a direct result of this agitation the Moplah rebellion broke out in August 1921. The Moplahs are a poor and fanatical Muhammadan community in the Madras Presidency, very backward in education and easily led astray. They had been told that the British Government had come to an end, and that they were free to do as they pleased, and they proceeded to murder the few Europeans they could find and to attack the Hindus. Large numbers of Hindus were killed, many more were forcibly converted to the Muhammadan religion, and women were treated with great brutality. At first a modified form of martial law was imposed, and an attempt was made to deal leniently with the rebels; but as the trouble spread a more severe form of martial law had to be introduced, and it was not till the following February that normal conditions were restored. The casualties among the troops employed amounted to 43 killed and 126 wounded, and not less than 3,000 of the Moplahs were killed in the course of the operations.

The agitation was resumed early in 1922, and on the 1st of February Mr. Gandhi sent an ultimatum to the Government. On the 4th of the same month a party of twenty-one police and village watchmen were murdered at Chauri Chaura by a mob headed by volunteers of the national movement, and in consequence of this civil disobedience was again suspended on the 12th of February. In the following month Mr. Gandhi was arrested for sedition and sentenced to six years' imprisonment. The Khilafat agitation gradually died down when it was found that the Government of India had all along supported the Muslim view, and it came to an end when the

Turks deposed the Sultan and nominated his nephew as Khalif, but not as Sultan.

Terrorism

In recent years there has been a great increase, mainly in Bengal, in attacks of a terrorist nature on the higher officials of Government, on the police, and on those who have in any way assisted the authorities. As the Great War went on, these activities diminished, but in 1919 those who had been interned under the special war measures were released, and some of them returned to their old organizations. The failure of Mr. Gandhi's methods, and his imprisonment, increased the number of sympathizers with the policy of violence; and the year 1923 saw a renewal of political dacoities, murders, and intimidation. The internment of over twenty persons under the Regulation III of 1818 had only a temporary effect. In 1924 two Europeans were attacked in Calcutta, at different times, being mistaken for the Commissioner of Police; one of them was killed. Bombs of a more powerful type than those used before the War were prepared, and leaflets were issued stating that the Bengal revolutionary council had decided to assassinate police officers and any one who helped them.

In 1925 an Act to continue for five years the special measures in force in Bengal was laid before Parliament and confirmed by an Order in Council; under this Act about 150 of the ringleaders in Bengal were interned. This action was followed by a transfer of revolutionary activities, first to the United Provinces, where two important conspiracies came to light, and then to the Punjab, where in December 1928 an Assistant Superintendent of Police and an Indian head constable (i.e. sergeant) were murdered at Lahore. Four months later, in April

1929, bombs were thrown into the Legislative Assembly at Delhi by two young men armed with revolvers. It was eventually proved that one of them had been concerned in the murders of police officers at Lahore, and he was convicted of this offence and executed in March 1931. An unsuccessful attempt to wreck the Viceroy's train near Delhi in December 1929 was probably the work of the same organization.

Meanwhile in Bengal the situation had improved so much that by the end of 1928 all those interned under the Act of 1925 had been released. The Act itself was due to expire in 1930, and the policy of waiting for this event may explain the lull which took place in Bengal in 1929. In the following year, however, there was a marked increase of terrorism throughout the province. In April a band of nearly 100 Bengali youths dressed in khaki, their leaders wearing officers' uniforms, attacked the police armoury, the Auxiliary Force armoury, the European club, and the telegraph and telephone offices at Chittagong in Eastern Bengal. In the course of these raids about a dozen people were killed, including six officials, and the party armed themselves with muskets, revolvers, and a Lewis gun. After this initial success, they were counter-attacked by four British officers, and retreated to the hills, where they carried on a kind of guerilla warfare for a considerable time. The raid was an ambitious one, as telegraph wires were cut as far as seventy miles away from Chittagong. Although as an attempt at an insurrection it was a complete failure, it gave an impetus to the terrorist movement by increasing the number and quality of the arms available, and by striking the imagination of the youth of Bengal.

During the remainder of 1930 there were many attacks on police and officials by bomb and revolver, including the assassination of the Inspector-General of Police and the

Inspector-General of Prisons. In August an attempt was made to murder the Commissioner of Police, Calcutta. Outside Bengal, attempts were made in December 1930 and in July 1931 on the lives of the Governor of the Punjab and of the Acting Governor of Bombay.

In 1931 the attention of the Bengal terrorists seems to have been concentrated more on the civil officials than on the police. The District Magistrates of Midnapore and Comilla and the District Judge of Alipore were shot dead, and the Commissioner of the Dacca Division and the District Magistrate of Dacca were wounded. In the present year (1932) the murders and attempted murders of officials, the theft of arms, and the commission of dacoities still continue. In February an unsuccessful attempt was made to shoot the Governor of the province, and in April the District Magistrate of Midnapore was shot and died later of his wounds, the second holder of that office to be assassinated within a year. Later in the streets of Calcutta two determined attempts have been made to shoot the editor of *The Statesman*, by parties of Bengalis armed with revolvers. In September a raid was made on the European Institute at a place in the Chittagong District while a dance was in progress. It was carried out by a band of Bengalis, armed with muskets and revolvers, and a bomb was thrown into the room which exploded and caused the death of an Englishwoman and injuries to eight Europeans, including two police officers. Throughout Bengal the police had to bear the brunt of an intensified campaign, and the loyalty and devotion to duty of all ranks of the service, both Indian and British, remained unshaken.

Communist Propaganda

As far back as 1920 the Communist leaders in Soviet Russia, including Lenin himself, openly declared that the

British Government was the principal antagonist of their movement, and that it should be attacked in India, and a special branch of the Comintern was set up to deal with Eastern questions. It is recognized that communism is opposed to the tenets of both the Hindu and the Muhammadan religion, and the Communists freely express their contempt for what they call the bourgeois nationalism of the Congress leaders. Their object is to organize a revolutionary mass struggle in order to overthrow the Government of India, and to this end they are anxious to secure the co-operation of the left wing of the Congress and Swaraj parties; but they intend that, when the Government and the rich bourgeois have been disposed of, the smaller bourgeois shall follow if the interests of communism require it. On the other hand, while many of the Indian extremists are ready to welcome the aid of communist propaganda and organization in order to weaken the power of the Government by strikes and mass disturbances, they have no intention of being dominated by the masses: on the contrary, they look forward to taking over the control of the country themselves. The ultimate aims of the Communists and of the Indian revolutionaries are therefore conflicting, but it would be an error to disregard, on these grounds, the danger likely to result from the spread of communism among the vast numbers of illiterate peasantry and manual workers who are so easily roused to mob violence.

In 1923 there were already in existence five groups of Communists working in Bombay, Lahore, Cawnpore, Calcutta, and Madras, in communication with a Bengali resident in Berlin, who was an active member of the Comintern of Moscow. He was engaged in sending money and literature to India, including a paper called the *Vanguard* and pamphlets advising the development of

organized agrarian strikes, food riots, the plunder of grain stores, and assaults on large estates with a view to confiscation. When the British Government was overthrown, they were to sweep away all Indian political groups and labour organizations which had not come into line, and the power of upper- and middle-class Indians was to be destroyed by depriving them of their possessions.

The conviction in 1924 of four Indian Communists for sedition gave the movement in India a temporary setback, but interest was revived by the arrival in January 1927 of Mr. S. Saklatvala, then M.P., a member of the British Communist party, who toured the country and addressed large audiences in the principal cities. Workers' and peasants' parties were formed in several centres, and in 1928 serious labour troubles took place both in Bombay and in Bengal, the communist element causing them to be more protracted and disorderly than usual. In March 1929 the Government was forced to take action and arrested about thirty persons, including two Europeans, and placed them on trial at Meerut for seditious conspiracy. The case is still before the Courts. The formation of workers' and peasants' parties, though hitherto on a small scale, and the organization of Youth Leagues on the lines advocated by Mr. Saklatvala, all indicate that the programme of the Comintern is being followed. The failure of the Communists in China, which became apparent in 1927, seems to have led them to devote more attention to India, both directly by operations in that country and indirectly through the Ghadr party in America, the dangerous possibilities of which have already been noticed.

The Red Shirt Movement

The organization known as the Red Shirts in the North-West Frontier Province is unique of its kind. In all the

revolutionary schemes which have been described, the Muhammadans, as a community, have taken no part except temporarily during the Turkish peace negotiations when their religious feelings were aroused by the Khilafat agitation; even then their efforts were directed more towards forcing the Government to intervene on the side of Turkey than towards the destruction of the Government itself. The Red Shirt movement, however, originated by Abdul Ghaffar Khan of Utmanzai, although consisting of Muhammadans, became a definitely revolutionary body; and before it was brought under control at the end of 1931, its leader was publicly announcing that it had two objects, firstly to free the country, and secondly to feed the hungry and clothe the naked.

This sentence gives the key to one aspect of the movement, its agrarian side, because, so far as it is directed against the payment of the land revenue, it derives much of its strength from the prevailing agricultural depression; but there is another aspect of much greater importance, namely, its religious side. This claims the support of Muslims not only in the Frontier Province but among the tribes, and across the border. The movement is essentially as hostile to Hindu aspirations as it is to British control.

Early in 1930 the number of those enrolled as Red Shirts rapidly increased, and the contempt for authority which the leaders of the movement inspired contributed largely to the spread of disaffection, and prepared the ground for a conflict. The gravest disturbance took place at Peshawar in April 1930, and in the end it became necessary to withdraw the police from the city, which was practically under the control of the mob from the 24th of April until it was reoccupied by troops on the 4th of May. Bannu, Mardan, and Kohat were the scenes of similar disturbances, and the rural areas were also

affected. Abdul Ghaffar Khan himself was arrested on the 23rd of April, 1930, and order was gradually restored when proceedings were taken against the Red Shirts, many of whom were imprisoned.

In March 1931, in pursuance of the settlement reached at Delhi between the Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi, Abdul Ghaffar Khan was released. He immediately declared that the truce was only temporary and that they must prepare for a greater struggle, and he visited the scenes where riots had occurred during the previous year, reminding the people of their sufferings and harping on the necessity for further sacrifices. The Red Shirts rapidly came to life again and, after a short visit to Mr. Gandhi at Bardoli in June, Abdul Ghaffar Khan resumed his tour of the Frontier Province. At the villages he visited the roads were lined with Red Shirts, drums were beaten, and in two places shots were fired as a salute. The Red Shirt volunteers also interfered over a wide area with the collection of revenue and the work of the police and the courts.

In August 1931 the Red Shirt movement was formally affiliated to the Indian National Congress. In December 1931 Abdul Ghaffar Khan explained his position to his followers as follows: 'People complain against me for having joined the Congress by selling my nation. The Congress is a national and not a Hindu body. It is a body composed of Hindus, Jews, Sikhs, Parsis, and Muslims. The Congress as a body is working against the British. The British nation is the enemy of the Congress and of the Pathans. I have therefore joined it and made common cause with the Congress to get rid of the British.'

At a meeting held at Utmanzai on the 20th of December 1931, the adherence of the Red Shirt movement to the Congress was reaffirmed, and arrangements were made to hold a New Year's Day parade in the first week of

January 1932, and to salute the Congress flag as a sign of independence. Throughout the Frontier Province disorder was increasing, and the extension of Abdul Ghaffar Khan's activities to the trans-frontier tribes was creating a situation of grave danger; emergency powers were therefore conferred on the Government; Abdul Ghaffar Khan was arrested in December 1931, and the Red Shirt organization was dispersed.

Chapter XIII

INDIANS OVERSEAS

By SIR DARCY LINDSAY, C.B.E.

[Sir Darcy Lindsay for many years occupied an important position in the business community of Calcutta. He was an active member of the Indian Legislative Assembly from its commencement in 1921 till 1930. He has always shown a keen interest in matters affecting the position of Indians overseas. He visited Kenya in 1925, and was a member of two delegations sent by the Government of India to South Africa in 1926 and 1932.]

UNTIL the 'thirties of last century the overseas movement of Indians was negligible and only to adjacent areas. After the abolition in 1834 of slavery within the British Empire, an extensive demand for Indian labour arose during the next seventy years in more distant areas. This demand was met by recruitment on the indenture system (under agreements providing for a definite period, subject to repatriation). In this way large Indian communities were gradually built up in different parts of the world, and as the labourers were followed in due course by an influx of traders, artisans, and professional men, these communities became mixed in their composition and tended to settle down permanently in the land of their adoption. Apart from these primarily labour settlements, emigration of a more spontaneous type occurred to other regions, notably to the east coast of Africa. The relations between all these Indian settlers, the employers for whom labour was recruited, the native populations amongst whom they settled, and the European colonists with whom they were brought into contact, have raised difficult problems which have occupied the attention of the Indian and other local governments concerned ever

since the migratory movements began. During the first seventy years of the period, the questions which arose were mainly problems of recruitment, transport, wage and labour conditions, terms of settlement and repatriation. During the past thirty years the political, social, and civic disabilities of the settlers within certain areas have attracted most attention and have been a subject of peculiarly acute solicitude to the politically-minded classes in India, who naturally resent any differentiation of treatment between their fellow countrymen and other subjects of His Majesty who are resident within the Empire.

Individual members of the central legislature have made it their business to watch the position closely, and the awakening of political interest has been very marked. To the Servants of India Society I suggest that much of the credit is due; for, following upon the late Mr. Gokhale, who showed the keenest interest in and sympathy with the cause of the Indian in South Africa, very sterling work has been done by the present head of the Society, Mr. Sastri. The Imperial Indian Citizenship Association, founded in Bombay some years ago, has also done good work in holding a watching brief and being ever ready to assist when called upon.

According to the latest official reports[1] the number of Indians settled outside of India is roughly 2,400,000, of whom 800,000 are in Ceylon; 628,000 in Malaya; 281,000 in Mauritius; 279,000 in the West Indies (British Guiana, Trinidad, and Jamaica); 165,000 in South Africa (mainly Natal); 73,000 in Fiji; and 69,000 in East Africa (mainly Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, and Zanzibar). Many of these have been born in the country of their parents' adoption and are therefore nationals for whom the

[1] *India in 1930–31* (H.M.S.O., 1932), p. 49.

respective countries are responsible. The total for the Empire is approximately 2,300,000 and, since not more than 100,000 Indians are resident in foreign countries, the questions which have arisen over Indian emigration have been usually between units of the British Empire.

The Government of India have a long and honourable record in the action they have taken since the earliest times, through legislation, commissions of inquiry, and negotiations with other Governments, to protect the interests of Indian emigrants. The first Emigration Act of 1837, which was applied originally to Mauritius and British Guiana, embodied regulations regarding recruitment, transport and determination of contracts. During the next seventy years, as new demands arose or abuses came to light, there were frequent inquiries by deputed officers and commissions; emigration was extended or suspended according to the varying circumstances of different areas, including certain French and Dutch colonies, while the emigration law was amended and consolidated on several occasions, notably in 1864, 1883, and 1908. These Acts gave the Governor-General in Council extensive powers to interfere whenever the conditions of employment proved to be unsatisfactory. The labour laws of the several colonies also provided for the protection and welfare of resident Indian labourers. Despite all precautions, however, abuses grew up under the system of indentured labour which became more and more repugnant to educated India; and after an exhaustive examination the Indian Government in consultation with the Home Government abolished the whole system with effect from 1916. They had previously in 1911 discontinued the recruitment of Indian labour for Natal. In these measures the Indian Government had the strong support of Indian public opinion, which was deeply

stirred by the difficulties of Indian settlers in South Africa.

The position of Indians in South Africa and Kenya formed the subject of a resolution which was moved in February 1922 in the first Legislative Assembly constituted under the 1919 Act. The grievances of their compatriots overseas created a common platform on which all sections of political India stood united. In this year the Government of India took the further important step of bringing the emigration of all unskilled labour under their absolute control. Act VII of 1922 prohibits all such emigration except so far as permitted by notification of the Governor-General in Council, previously approved by both Chambers of the central legislature. A Standing Emigration Committee composed of twelve members of the legislature has also been constituted to advise Government on all major questions. These measures have exercised a liberalizing influence on the labour regulations of those Colonies which still need Indian settlers. Under Act VII of 1922 emigration to Ceylon and Malaya has been legalized on conditions which protect the interests of the emigrant labourer.

It will be clear that, so far as any fresh emigration of Indian labour is concerned, the Indian public, as represented in the legislature, holds the key in its own hand and can dictate its own terms. The position is different with regard to the political and civic rights of older settlers, some of whom have been in their adopted homes for generations. The grievances and disabilities of Indians in certain of the Dominions and Colonies have been the subject of discussion for the last thirty years in the public press of India, in the Indian legislatures, at successive Imperial Conferences, and in prolonged correspondence between the Governments concerned. Although con-

siderable progress has been achieved, a final and satisfactory solution has not yet been attained in all cases.

The Indian case was put before the Imperial War Conferences of 1917 and 1918 by the late Lord Sinha, and on his motion a reciprocity resolution was generally accepted, which, while recognizing the right of each member of the British Commonwealth to control the composition of its own population by suitable immigration restrictions, conceded to Indians, as to other British subjects, the right of visit or temporary residence in other parts of the Empire for purposes of pleasure, commerce, or education, and also permitted Indians permanently domiciled in those parts to bring in their wives and families under certain conditions. The principle of this resolution was reaffirmed at the Imperial Conference of 1921, which further recognized that there was 'incongruity between the position of India as an equal member of the Empire and the existence of disabilities upon British Indians domiciled in some parts of the Empire'. The Conference was therefore of opinion 'that in the interests of the solidarity of the Commonwealth it is desirable that the rights of such Indians to citizenship should be recognized'. This weighty pronouncement was accepted by all members of the Conference except the representatives of South Africa, who pleaded exceptional circumstances. The Indian representatives recorded their profound concern at the position of Indians in South Africa and hoped that further negotiations between the two Governments might lead to a more satisfactory position.

The case of South Africa is further considered below. Here it may be noted that after the 1921 Conference Mr. Sastri was deputed in 1922 to visit Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, and consult with the Dominion Governments regarding the position of Indian settlers in

their territories. Mr. Sastri achieved remarkable success on his ambassadorial visit, which directed sympathetic attention to certain Indian disabilities, greatly improved the general feeling betwen India and these Dominions, and bore valuable fruit later. The position was again considered at the Imperial Conference of 1923; and as a result of proposals made by the Indian representatives, a Colonies Committee was constituted by the Government of India in March 1924 to confer with the Colonial Office and make representations on a variety of important questions affecting Indian interests, particularly in East Africa.

The increase of status which India has attained through her representation on the Imperial Conference and her membership of the League of Nations has been of very material advantage to her in pressing her claims for the just treatment of her nationals both within the Empire and throughout the world. The onus has been placed heavily on those governments which have denied fair treatment to the Indian elements in their population to justify their action in the eyes of the world.

The disabilities of the Indian communities in South Africa and Kenya, which for many years caused great resentment in India, may now be considered in fuller detail.

The advent of the Indian to South Africa dates from 1860 with the demand for labour in the sugar plantations of Natal. Emigration under indenture continued from that year with various vicissitudes till it was finally stopped in 1911. Traders later penetrated into the Transvaal and took part in the initial development of townships on the Rand. As the Indian settlers increased, the local governments became alarmed and began to adopt special measures for curtailing their settlements and restricting

their trading facilities. Representations from the Indian Government had little or no effect. The trouble came to a head in the Transvaal, where Mr. Gandhi in May 1907 started his first passive resistance movement to secure justice for his fellow countrymen. After a compromise in 1911 passive resistance was given up, but the passing of the Immigrants Regulation Act in 1913 caused further trouble and was followed by a second and more extended campaign of passive resistance, which continued till General Smuts and Mr. Gandhi reached an agreement in 1914. The troubles had roused widespread indignation in India, which was eloquently voiced by the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, in a public speech in December 1913, as mentioned in Chapter XI.

In 1920 the Union Government appointed the Asiatic Inquiry Commission to inquire into and report on certain matters affecting Asiatics in South Africa. Sir Benjamin Robertson, representing the Indian Government, held a watching brief; and in his very full statement to the Commission dealt most effectively with the position and made valuable recommendations.

In 1925 the introduction of the Areas Reservation Bill, which aimed at the segregation of Indians in Natal both for purposes of residence and trade, raised a fresh storm. Resentment was again widespread in India, and Government was urged to take effective action. The situation was, however, extremely delicate. The Government of India had repeatedly urged on the Union Government the holding of a conference, and eventually in deference to their wishes the Union Government agreed to receive a small deputation. This deputation, which included three Indians and one Englishman, proceeded to South Africa in November 1925. In face of many difficulties, the delegation was successful in its mission and in due

course gave valuable evidence before the Select Committee of the Union House of Representatives. In the end the Union Government agreed to the holding of a conference of representatives of the two Governments and the postponement of further consideration of the Bill. This welcome decision was received in India with feelings of thankfulness and relief.

In September 1926 a deputation consisting of the Minister of Mines and Industries and other members of the Union House of Assembly visited India at the invitation of the Government to enable them to gain some idea of India's cultural and economic importance. The visit undoubtedly created a favourable impression. The Round Table Conference, as it has been termed, on the Indian problem in South Africa, met at Capetown in December 1926. The Government of India were represented by Sir Muhammad Habibullah, Member of the Viceroy's Council, Sir Geoffrey Corbett, Mr. Sastri, Sir George Paddison, Sir Phiroze Sethna, and the present writer, with Mr. G. S. Bajpai as secretary. The Union Prime Minister, General Hertzog, opened the Conference, and Dr. Malan, a Minister of the Union Government, afterwards presided.

The discussions were conducted in an atmosphere of goodwill. An understanding was arrived at, commonly known as the Capetown agreement, the main features of which were: improved conditions in the existing scheme of assisting emigration, an 'uplift' clause dealing with the education of Indians and improved standards of living, and an arrangement for the appointment by the Government of India of an Agent in South Africa. It was also agreed by the Union Government that no further action would be taken on the Areas Reservation Bill in order that the agreement might come into operation under

favourable auspices and have a fair trial. Mr. Gandhi described the agreement as an honourable compromise, and on the whole it was generally well received both in India and in South Africa. In May 1927 Mr. Sastri was appointed Agent and held office until January 1929, when he was succeeded by Sir Kurma Reddi. The agency has proved of great value on all sides and has helped to secure continuous and effective co-operation between the two Governments. To help his fellow countrymen, Mr. Sastri supported the appointment of a Commission on Indian Education in Natal, and the Government of India deputed two educationists whose recommendations have been of much assistance to the Commission. To Mr. Sastri's efforts are due the foundation at Durban of the Sastri College, a combined high school and training institution, opened by the Governor-General of South Africa in October 1929.

The Capetown agreement was understood to be operative for a period of five years, and it came up for consideration at a conference held in January 1932, which was called by the Union Government. It had been agreed, at the request of the Government of India, that a pending measure, the Transvaal Asiatic Tenure (Amendment) Bill, should be discussed at the conference. This Bill was framed on the recommendations of a Select Committee appointed in 1930 who had examined witnesses from both sides, including the acting Agent of the Government of India, Mr. J. D. Tyson. While the Bill purported to consolidate existing Acts, it appeared also to reintroduce segregation, much to the alarm of the Indian community all over the Union. Political opinion in India was again much perturbed and supported the growing opposition to the Bill among Indians in South Africa. The delegates representing India at the conference were led by Sir

Fazl-i-Husain, Member of the Viceroy's Council, and included four members of the delegation of 1926 as well as the Agent (Sir Kurma Reddi) and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. The outcome of the Conference was a recommendation to continue the agreement with certain amendments. It was recognized that the agreement had exercised a powerful influence in fostering friendly relations between the two Governments.

In the case of Kenya, while Indians have for centuries been established on the east coast of Africa and Zanzibar as traders, it was not until the building of the Uganda railway began in 1896 that labour was brought over from India in considerable numbers: in their wake came the petty trader to supply their many needs. With the completion of the work the labour was mostly returned to India, but the trader remained to aid in opening up the new country by supplying the wants of the native workers on the estates and elsewhere. There were also the needs of the artisan and other skilled labourers arriving from India to be looked after, and by degrees these small traders and shopkeepers prospered and became established in the townships which they helped to develop. The evidence given before the Sanderson Committee in 1910 by Sir John Kirk, the great authority on Zanzibar, showed the activity of British Indians on the east coast. He admitted that 'but for the Indians we should not be there now. It was entirely through being in possession of the influence of these Indian merchants that we were enabled to build up the influence that eventually resulted in our position.'

As development proceeded with the arrival of European settlers, restrictions were by degrees imposed on Indians, including their exclusion from ownership of lands in the uplands, and in the report of Professor Simpson the question was raised of segregation in Nairobi, a suggestion

which gave rise to considerable alarm. In 1919 an Economic Commission reported adversely to Indian interests; the report created indignation and exasperation both locally and in India and brought things to a head. The Government of India made a strong protest in their dispatch published in October 1920, setting forth the main grounds of Indian complaint in regard to the electoral franchise, segregation, reservation of the highlands, and proposed restrictions on immigration. In July 1923 the British Government presented a White Paper to Parliament in which the principle was laid down that 'the interests of the African native must be paramount'. A communal franchise was adopted and provision was made for eleven seats in the legislature for elected Europeans, five for elected Indians, one nominated Arab, one missionary representing the African natives, and a nominated official majority. The policy of segregation was abandoned as between Europeans and Asiastics, but existing practice in regard to the highlands was maintained and a similar reservation of land of questionable utility was offered to Indians in the lowlands. The publication of the White Paper resulted in a boycott which caused considerable bitterness of feeling and suffering with no tangible results. As an outcome of the White Paper adult suffrage on a communal basis was conferred upon Indians, and in 1925 five Indian members took their seats on the Council. In spite of the good work of these five members, the Indian National Congress of East Africa later caused their resignation on the demand for a common roll, and decreed that no canditate should offer himself at the next elections. The desire for a common electoral roll, even on a restricted franchise, is deep seated and is largely based on the sentiment which demands the equal recognition of Indians as citizens of the Empire.

Two further inquiries, at which representatives of the Government of India were invited to appear, took place between 1927 and 1929, and were followed by the appointment at the end of 1930 of a Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament to examine the whole question. Mr. Sastri presented the Indian case before the Select Committee; and their report was published in November 1931. It maintained and explained the doctrine of the paramountcy of native interests; repeated the proposals for the union or federation of the East African Governments under a High Commissioner or Governor-General; retained unimpaired the control of His Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom as necessary to hold the balance between the interests of the widely differing communities concerned; opposed the setting up of an unofficial majority in the Kenya Legislative Council; and continued the existing system of communal representation, though admitting that, if at some future date changes were made in the constitution, the desirability of introducing a common roll should be re-examined without prejudice. The report of the Select Committee was referred to a conference of East African Governors, and on their advice its recommendations were generally accepted by the Secretary of State for the Colonies in his dispatch (Cmd. 4141) of 13 July 1932. These decisions, although they do not wholly satisfy Indian desires, particularly in the matter of a common franchise, have in some respects allayed the misapprehensions that had arisen.

Finally, as regards Ceylon and Malaya, it may be mentioned that the Government of India have now in these areas Agents who keep in close touch with labour and report on prevailing conditions, while at ports of embarkation there are emigration depots with government officials in charge to ensure adherence to the regulations.

Chapter XIV

THE POLITICS OF THE INDIAN STATES, THE CHAMBER OF PRINCES, AND THE FEDERAL IDEA

By SIR ROBERT ERSKINE HOLLAND, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., C.V.O., BARRISTER-AT-LAW

[Sir Robert Holland, of the Indian Civil Service, was employed in the Indian States during a considerable part of his thirty years' service in India. He was Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana from 1920 to 1925, and was a member of the Council of India from 1925 to 1931.]

NEARLY one-half of the area of India (excluding Burma) is not British territory. Hundreds of States and Estates, some veritable kingdoms, some covering but a few square miles, retained their separate existence and identity after the boundaries of British rule had been settled, but sooner or later every Ruler, whether Prince or Chieftain, rendered allegiance to the British Crown. From the point of view of political science, the position of the Indian States is unprecedented in history. Many of the States entered into treaties or other engagements with the Paramount Power, and these are still in full force as between the Crown and each contracting State. But generally speaking the relationship between the whole body of the States and the British Government is the outcome of an evolutionary process whose development must be traced, not merely through the varying formulas employed and conditions prescribed during successive treaty-making periods, but also in the pages of history which narrate the consolidation of British power and the gradual unification of India.

The brief historical retrospect given in the second chapter of *Modern India* (1931) explains the diverse origin

and varying characteristics of the leading States and groups of States and illustrates their setting in the fabric of the Indian Empire.

Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858 in effect guaranteed to the States the measure of sovereignty which they severally possess in their internal affairs. As regards the nature and extent of this sovereignty, the following extract from a minute by Sir Henry Maine may be quoted:

> 'there may be found in India every shade and variety of sovereignty, but there is only one independent sovereign—the British Government. The mode or degree in which sovereignty is distributed between the British Government and any Native State is always a question of fact which has to be separately decided in each case and to which no general rules apply.'

Each State, to the extent to which it possesses sovereign powers, manages its own internal affairs, making and administering laws, imposing and collecting taxes and, in many cases, maintaining its own army. The States can have no relations with foreign Powers except through the British Government; they share the obligation for the common defence of the Empire; and they are under a general responsibility for the good government of their territories and the welfare of their subjects. It is the duty of the British Government to preserve peace and good order throughout India, to protect the States against foreign foes or domestic anarchy, to preserve the dynasties of the Rulers, and to render them active support in the conduct of their administrations, so long as they are loyal to the Crown and faithful in the fulfilment of their obligations. For the proper discharge of these duties, it is incumbent on the Crown to intervene at its discretion in the internal affairs of the States, with scrupulous respect for the provisions of treaties and engagements and with due regard to the peculiar setting and traditional customs of

each principality. The relationship of the States with the Paramount Power has undergone a marvellous change since the period of the 'ring fence policy' treaties which, up to the year 1813, marked the unwillingness of the East India Company to extend its responsibilities beyond its own territorial limits. The States have, to use a much quoted phrase, 'become in fact part and parcel of the Indian Empire with which their interests are identified and identical'.

But the integral connexion of the States with the Empire consists not only in their relations to the British Crown but also in their growing interest in matters affecting their common fortunes *vis-à-vis* the British provinces, and in the political future of India as a whole.

It was formerly a commonplace of text-books that the Indian States were completely isolated from one another, the Government of India representing them in their intercourse with each other as well as in international transactions. While the East India Company was competing with other powers for dominion in India, it naturally desired to isolate its allies with a view to frustrate enemy intrigues in friendly territory, to preclude combinations which might develop dangerously, or quarrels which would prove ruinous to the Rulers and embarrassing to the Company. This policy was expressed in engagements which are still in force in about fifty-five States, to the effect that the Ruler 'shall abstain from interference in the affairs of any other State or Power, and shall have no communication or correspondence with any other State or Power . . . except with the previous sanction and through the medium of the Governor-General in Council'.

Soon after the Mutiny, Government began to realize that the rapid development of communications and the growing concern of the States in matters of common

interest to themselves and the British provinces had completely changed the relations of the States with each other and with the Paramount Power. Lord Lytton, in 1877, proposed to include eight of the Princes in a new consultative body, to be called 'Counsellors of the Empress', but the Council never came into being, and it was left to Lord Curzon to discover, after he had held a conference of Rulers at Ajmer in 1904, not only that the idea of conference and co-operation was very agreeable to the Princes, but that, whether it were favoured by Government or not, the practice would more and more prevail. Lord Curzon, in advocating a scheme for a Council of Princes, said: 'More and more do they feel that they are an object of genuine solicitude to the Government, and, in their own spheres, partners and allies in the administration. More and more do they welcome any reciprocal evidence of the confidence that we claim to feel, and yearn for practical association in the cares and responsibilities as well as in the compliments and trappings of Empire.'

Lord Curzon's scheme was not approved by the home Government, but his idea bore fruit. In 1908 Lord Minto took the Princes into his confidence by consulting them individually on the question of the growth of sedition in India, and Lord Hardinge, in 1913 and 1914, invited some of the Princes to confer with him at Delhi on an educational matter of special interest to their order. Lord Chelmsford, who instituted a system of annual conference, notably widened the field of discussion. In February 1918 he and Mr. Montagu discussed informally with a committee of the Princes a draft scheme which they had prepared with the object of safeguarding the interests of the States and their Rulers when constitutional reforms were being framed for British India. That scheme made it plain that the Princes, besides desiring to have a

voice in the counsels of the Government of India in matters of All-India interest or of common concern, were perturbed by the fear that the whole character of their relations with the British Government was being insensibly changed by the development of a body of political usage, based on precedents and rulings of the Political Department of the Government of India, which did not pay proper heed to their treaty rights and prerogatives.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Montagu-Chelmsford report, His Majesty's Government, in 1920, called into being a permanent council of Princes, as an advisory and consultative body, under the title of 'Chamber of Princes' (Narendra Mandal). The inauguration ceremony was performed by the Duke of Connaught in 1921, and the Royal Proclamation then read marked formally the abandonment of the policy of isolation, since by it the Princes were summoned to take a larger share in the political development of India and were granted opportunities of 'comparing experience, interchanging ideas, and framing mature and balanced conclusions on matters of common interest'. The States had already been admitted to the wider councils of the Empire, since a Prince was nominated to represent them on the Imperial War Cabinet and at the Imperial Conference, and to take part in the Peace Conference of 1919. Further, in order to allay the anxieties of the Princes in regard to their treaty position, the political method and procedure of the Government of India were revised in certain respects on the lines suggested in the Montagu-Chelmsford report and provision was made, in particular, for the codification of political practice, within specified limits, in consultation with a standing committee of the Chamber.

It became apparent, however, that the Princes were still dissatisfied and apprehensive. While sympathizing

genuinely with the desire of British Indians to achieve some form of self-government, they stood solid for the British connexion on which the maintenance of their treaty rights seemed to depend, and they were anxious to know whether, if British India achieved Dominion status, the British Parliament could or would hand over to it the conduct of relations with the States. Secondly, they were disquieted by the diatribes of British Indian agitators against autocratic rule, and felt it essential to obtain from the British Government such a definition of its paramount power of intervention in the affairs of the States as would not only remove their existing grievances but would safeguard their internal sovereignty for ever under any new form of constitution that might be devised for British India or for India as a whole. As a corollary to this definition, they desired an assurance that the Viceroy, as distinct from the Governor-General in Council, should be the Crown's agent for the conduct of relations with the States. Thirdly, they desired that an inquiry should be held into the financial and economic relations between British India and the States, with a view to affording the States relief from fiscal burdens shown to be inequitable, and in the hope that, when the amount of their proper contribution to the central exchequer had been duly ascertained, no further subvention would be demanded from the States without their consent by any central Government, whatever its constitutional form might be. They regarded such an inquiry as an essential prelude to any schemes whether for federal coalition or for organized consultation between the States and British India in matters of common concern.

The Indian States Committee with Sir Harcourt Butler as chairman was appointed by the Secretary of State in 1927 to consider these questions. Its report, issued in

1929, contained several important recommendations in the Princes' favour; namely, (i) that the Princes should not be transferred without their own agreement to a relationship with a new government in British India responsible to an India legislature; (ii) that in future the Viceroy—not the Governor-General in Council—should be the agent for the Crown in all dealings with the Indian States; (iii) that a remedy ought to be found for the States' real and substantial grievance in regard to the incidence of customs duty; and (iv) that an expert committee, on which the Princes should be represented, should be appointed to inquire into the financial relations between the States and British India. This committee, appointed in 1930, and known as 'the fact finding committee', collected material for determining, on the credit side, the value of any direct or indirect contributions made by the States to Imperial resources, and, on the debit side, the assessment of what their proportionate contribution for Imperial burdens should be. The committee was unable to compute the net value of areas ceded by States in the past to the British Government, but it elucidated, for the first time, the amount of customs duty accruing to central revenues from the consumption of imported articles in the States. The first and second of the above recommendations were endorsed by the report of the Indian Statutory Commission which appeared in 1930.

The Princes were not in accord with all the conclusions of the Butler report, and they were particularly disappointed at the Butler Committee's failure to define the Crown's functions as Paramount Power clearly and positively on the basis of treaties and engagements, supplemented only by such usage and practice as might have been agreed to by the Rulers. They were immensely fortified, however, by the Committee's recognition of

several of their most important contentions, and it was probably in consequence of this that their delegation to the first Round Table Conference, in November 1930, made an electrifying announcement in favour of federation within the Empire. In the words of the Prime Minister: 'The declaration of the Princes has revolutionized the situation . . . has at once not only opened our vision, not only cheered our hearts, not only let us lift up our eyes and see a glowing horizon, but has simplified our duties. The Princes have given a most substantial contribution in opening up the way to a really united federated India.'

But the delegation felt it necessary to qualify their assent to the principle of federation by stipulations which may be stated in substance as follows:

I. That the sovereignty, autonomy, and treaty or other rights of the States should be safeguarded and maintained intact, subject only to such delegation of their powers to a federal Government as the Rulers might decide to make voluntarily by treaty with the Crown.

II. That entry into the federation should be at the discretion of each individual State.

III. That all matters affecting the Rulers personally or their dynasties should be reserved for decision by the Viceroy as agent of the British Crown.

The third stipulation superseded the Princes' original proposal that the Viceroy should be the Crown's agent for the conduct of all relations with the States, a scheme which must have proved incompatible with any federal plan.

The Chamber of Princes at the meeting in March 1931 endorsed the action taken by its representatives, and authorized them further to carry on negotiations 'with due regard to the interests of the States, and subject to the final confirmation and ratification by the Chamber

and each individual State'. Some Princes, however, doubted the existence of a true federal spirit in India; they feared that the British provinces and the States, owing to the disparity of their political traditions and ideals, could not be associated federally without disproportionate sacrifice by the Rulers, and they therefore advocated, as a safer alternative, a union of the States alone in relationship with the Crown.

When the delegates gathered for the opening of the second session of the Round Table Conference in September 1931 there was a general conviction that the solution of India's constitutional problem must be sought through a federation of provinces and States, but it was realized that the co-operation of the States could only be secured upon terms which would conserve their integrity and safeguard the sovereign rights of the Rulers. Discussions in the Federal Structure Committee during the first session had shown that each of the stipulations made by the Princes opened upon a labyrinth of difficulties, and the proceedings of the Committee during the second session revealed the magnitude of the issues involved and their extreme complexity.

In order to find a clue to the tangle, it is necessary to try and interpret the point of view of an Indian Ruler. Four loyalties strive for the mastery of his soul. First, his loyalty to the Crown, which is a very real and forceful inspiration since, apart from treaty obligations, it is a personal sentiment, with a religious basis. This bids the Ruler support the federal idea, partly because it is the constitutional scheme favoured by the British Government, and partly because it seems to afford the surest means of checkmating the revolutionary and separatist movement in India. It also constrains him, however, to scrutinize rigorously every detail of the proposed federal structure

so as to ensure that the sacred links of Empire and the supremacy of the Crown may not be weakened or imperilled in any way. In the words of the Maharaja of Patiala: 'We feel that under the new constitutional arrangement to which His Majesty's Government is pledged, we cannot effectively discharge our obligations to the Crown under our treaties, unless we become partners in the Greater India architecture now being designed, with proper safeguards suited to our special conditions.' Many public utterances by the Princes illustrate their determination to maintain the British connexion.

The Ruler's second loyalty is to 'India, a nation'. As a fervent patriot he must do all in his power to help his country to achieve the status of a self-governing Dominion. The mere idea that the States might be obstacles in the way of Indian constitutional advance is abhorrent to him; he knows that every safeguard and guarantee that he desires to have embodied in the federal scheme must ultimately be tested by one criterion, namely, whether or not it will render the unification of India impracticable; and he will explore every possible avenue in order to avoid the frustration of ambitions which are common to the States as well as to British India.

The Ruler's third loyalty is to his throne, his State, and his people. Through his relation with the Crown, his dynasty is secure, his country is protected from foes, his sovereign rights, whatever they may be, are guaranteed, and the interests of his State and people are respected. The Ruler feels it to be his duty, perhaps his paramount duty, to hand on untarnished to his successor the sacred trust which has come down to him from his ancestors. He now knows that the British Government will not transfer him without his consent to a Government in India responsible to the legislature, and he will not be

tempted from the shelter of his British treaties and engagements unless he can feel assured that his rights will be fully safeguarded under the new order of things. Moreover, quite apart from the question of federation, he is deeply concerned that the conditions of intervention by the Crown should be definitely enunciated. Some Rulers further hold that, if the States are to throw in their lot with British India, such definition will be of vital import for the safeguarding of their autonomy. They trust that if the British Government will not make the concessions spontaneously, it may be elicited perforce during the process of federation and treaty making.

The Ruler's fourth loyalty is to his order. In scrutinizing the terms offered for entry into the federation, he must satisfy himself, not merely that they are appropriate to the particular conditions of his own State, but also that they are fair and reasonable from the point of view of his brother Rulers. If the federal experiment is to succeed, it must attract within its orbit not only the 109 States which are members of the Chamber of Princes in their own right, but also the numerous so-called 'smaller States' whose adhesion presents problems of peculiar difficulty. As the Maharaja of Bikaner said:

> 'The interests of the smaller States are the interests, generally speaking, of all the States; their welfare and continued existence is our most zealous care; their sovereign rights and privileges it is also the duty of us, constituting the bigger States, equally faithfully to safeguard, as it is also our duty to further the legitimate aspirations of such smaller States, and sympathetically to consider and support their reasonable demands.'

In the light of the Princes' sentiments and responsibilities the three stipulations which they have made assume grave importance. They will now be examined severally.

It is acknowledged in stipulation I that if the Rulers enter a federation it will be incumbent upon them, by

treaty with the Crown, to delegate powers to the federal Government in certain matters concerning their States. But before they decide to do this, they naturally want to know (1) what share they will have in the governance of India under the new order of things; (2) on what lines the special financial problems which they raised before the Butler Committee will be settled; (3) what powers they will be required to cede; and (4) what guarantee there will be for the observance of the terms of the pact by British India, the more powerful partner.

The answer to the first question depends primarily upon the representation to be accorded to the States in the federal legislature. The first session of the Round Table Conference premised that the legislature would be bicameral in form. But many of the Princes, when they gave their adherence to the federal scheme, contemplated that the federal body would be unicameral, and that their delegates to it would be nominated by themselves or their Governments. If an essentially democratic Lower Chamber were the predominant partner in the federal constitution, their States would be increasingly exposed to influences irreconcilable with their traditional systems of government, and, in particular, their participation in such a Chamber must necessarily raise the inconvenient question whether the States' representatives ought not to be elected by the votes of the people, instead of being nominated by the Rulers.

On the assumption, however, that the federal legislature must be bicameral, the Princes' delegation pressed, during the second session of the Conference, that the two Chambers should have identical powers and co-ordinate authority, a joint session being convened to decide cases of difference; and it also urged that the States should be allotted half the seats in an Upper Chamber of 250

members,[1] and one-third of the seats in a Lower Chamber of 400 members. The third report of the Federal Structure Committee recommended an Upper Chamber of 200 members with an allotment of 80 seats for the States, and a Lower Chamber of 300 with an allotment of approximately 100 seats for the States. This divergence from the Princes' claims as regards the Upper Chamber was a serious matter from their point of view, partly because an important question of principle, namely, whether the States as one of the two great federating elements should have equal representation with the provinces of British India, was decided against them; and partly because, if the States' quota of membership were fixed at a figure below 125, it would be difficult to effect such an apportionment of seats as would satisfy the legitimate claims of the smaller States.

As regards apportionment of seats, the issue is as follows. The Butler Committee's report alluded to three classes of States, namely (*a*) the 109 States the Rulers of which are members of the Chamber of Princes in their own right,[2] (*b*) the 126 States represented in the Chamber of Princes by 12 elected members, and (*c*) the remaining 327 Estates, &c. Some of the Princes are in favour of taking this classification as a guide in distributing the States' quota, and it would seem to be an invidious matter to exclude from individual representation in the Upper Chamber States which already possess it in the Narendra Mandal. Many other States, however, and especially the so-called smaller States, oppose the suggestion on the ground that the system of representation in the Chamber

[1] Some members of the delegation desired that the Upper Chamber should be a smaller and more compact body.

[2] Ruling Princes who enjoy permanent dynastic salutes of eleven guns or over, together with other Rulers of States who, having a similar salute of nine guns, exercise full or practically full internal powers.

of Princes, based as it is on minimum gun salutes and the internal powers of a Ruler, was an expedient devised to facilitate the constitution of a special consultative body; that Government never intended to use it as a criterion for assessing the importance of States;[1] that such a classification or any classification based on salutes according to the list of precedence is unsound and misleading, since it takes no account of the history, population, area, and revenue of a State, or the nature of its administration; and, finally, that the principle of 'one State one vote' is unfair to the larger as well as to the smaller States. Alternative proposals have been made for distributing the States' quota (*a*) on a population basis, with a conjoint sacrifice of 6 or 8 seats by the larger States in favour of the smaller, and (*b*) on a classification by the salute list, with 'weightage' for larger States or on special grounds. Each of these schemes has its peculiar disadvantages. The Federal Structure Committee suggested in their report that, if the Rulers failed to arrive at an agreement on the subject within a prescribed period, an impartial tribunal should be set up by His Majesty's Government to advise as to the determination of the matter. The decision, whatever it may be, is likely to be an important factor in determining the adherence of individual States to the federation.

On the subject of the respective functions of the two Chambers, the States' delegation failed to carry their point that the principle of equality of powers should apply also to the voting of supply, a very crucial matter in view of the States' inferiority of representation in the Lower Chamber.

Two other points relating to the federal legislature are

[1] See Lord Chelmsford's speech at the Princes' Conference in January 1919, quoted at p. 139 of Cmd. 3997 of 1932.

a source of anxiety to the Princes. The first, alluded to above, concerns the method of selection of the States' representatives in the Lower Chamber, and the second concerns a proposal that, in the event of a considerable number of States holding back from the federation at the outset, the voting strength of those joining should be temporarily augmented pending further accessions. The Committee thought it premature to offer any suggestion as regards the second point, and, as regards the first, the report said that 'the Committee as a whole are prepared to leave this matter to the judgement of the States'. The proceedings of the second session show, however, that both matters are very controversial, and powerful influences will certainly be employed to secure that the States' representatives in the Lower Chamber shall be elected by the people. There is a strong feeling in British India that responsible government under a federal system should not be watered down by the lack of responsible government within the territory of the Princes.

In order to elude these and other difficulties, some of the Princes proposed that, as a preliminary step, all the States should enter a confederation through the Chamber of Princes which, 'enlarged and constitutionalized', would then be an electoral college for selecting the States' representatives to the federal legislature. The scheme, which was developed and clearly expounded by H.H. the Maharaj-Rana of Dholpur, gained a good deal of support; but it was not adopted by the Princes' delegation, and did not appear to commend itself to the British Indian representatives at the second session. The Viceroy discussed federation problems with the States' representatives at Simla, in September 1932, and it was announced that 'the question of the future composition of the federal legislature would require further detailed consideration'.

It is clear that no basis for agreement had then been found.

When the issues arising out of the structure and composition of the federal legislature are settled, the nature of the federal executive, the share in it to be accorded to the States, and its relationship with the legislature will have to be decided. The Conference did not reach a stage at which these points could be discussed effectively, but their decision will materially affect the Princes' views on the subject of federation.

The second question relating to the settlement of the special financial problems is answered, so far as it can be answered at the present stage, by the report of the Indian States Enquiry Committee (Financial), Cmd. 4103, published in July 1932. The Committee recommend that some of the Rulers' claims should be conceded, but the report as a whole offers much food for thought, both for the States collectively and individually and for British India. British Indian opinion may strain at the probable net result of the Committee's proposals, namely that the Indian States should eventually benefit to the tune of about ten million rupees[1] per annum at the expense of federal resources, while the federal Government will be unable to tax the States directly, without their consent. The report did not deal with the question of direct contributions by the States to the federal Government, as this was not within the Committee's terms of reference.

As regards the third question, the cession of powers by the Rulers to the federation will depend on the principles of federal taxation; the distribution of legislative powers between the federal and other legislatures; and the constitution of the federal Court. It would be premature to

[1] This figure is liable to be considerably reduced by the proposed set-off on account of privileges and immunities enjoyed by the entering States.

discuss here the complicated and difficult problems arising out of these issues.

Then, turning to the fourth question, as regards the observance of the terms of the federal constitution by British India, it is clear that, when once federation is accomplished, the States would not be entitled to call upon the Paramount Power for special protection in regard to any matter within the federal field, that is to say, in regard to which they have ceded powers to the federal Government. The preservation of their rights within this field must depend upon the amount of influence that the States may be able to exert upon the conduct of the federal administration; and upon the integrity and wisdom of the federal Court which is to interpret and safeguard the constitution. Many issues of importance to the States are likely to arise within the federal field which are not justiciable by any Court.

If the Princes are satisfied as regards the four questions discussed above, they must next feel assured that federation will not involve diminution of their sovereign and other rights in matters outside the federal field. As regards such matters, His Majesty's Government has declared that: 'The connection of the States with the Federation will remain subject to the basic principle that, in regard to all matters not ceded by them to the Federation, their relations will be with the Crown acting through the agency of the Viceroy'.[1] It was in the hope of reducing this assurance to more precise terms that, as mentioned above, some Rulers have laid particular stress on the need for obtaining a definition of paramountcy as a preliminary to federation. It appears, however, from the account of the discussions held at Simla in September 1932, that the representatives of the larger States present there took the view that a

[1] See Cmd. 3778 of 1931, p. 506.

definition and delimitation of paramountcy outside the federal field would be impracticable and against the interests of the States, inasmuch as having regard to the circumstances, they could not afford to weaken the authority of the Crown through a reciprocal compact. It is beyond question that every limitation of the Crown's discretion to intervene in matters affecting the exercise of the Rulers' sovereignty will narrow also the field within which they can hope for support against encroachment on their autonomy and treaty rights in matters not ceded by them to the federal Government. It must be expected that federation will stimulate agitation in the States, impelling the Rulers in the direction of changes which they may think premature or undesirable, such as the democratization of their systems of government, the grant of federal citizenship and fundamental rights to their subjects, the election by vote of States' representatives in the federal legislature, the linking up of the States' Courts with the federal judiciary, and the abolition of existing regulations as regards the press, freedom of speech, and the exclusion of political agitators. Movements in support of these and other reforms have been fostered by individuals and bodies claiming to speak on behalf of Indian States' subjects, but the Princes deny that such agitation possesses any spontaneity or vitality. They hold to assurances which they have received from Viceroys in the past, that the time and place and manner of change, if change is to come about in their States, is in their hands.

The Princes passed a resolution on the subject of essential reforms at the meeting in 1928 in the following terms: that it is 'important for the future wellbeing of the States that they should carefully review their administrations with a view to inaugurate, where not already existing, measures such as the following:—(*a*) a definite code of law

guaranteeing liberty of person and safety of property, administered by a judiciary independent of the executive; and (*b*) the settlement, upon a reasonable basis, of the purely personal expenditure of the Ruler, as distinguished from the public charges of administration.' Measures of this nature have already been brought into effect in some States.

Representative institutions or consultative councils have been called into being by some Rulers, but even where they do not yet exist the system of administration cannot be characterized as irresponsible autocracy, because the Ruler is responsive in a remarkable degree to the needs and sentiments of his people. He is bound by traditions and customs which circumscribe his actions; his functions and rights are laid down by immemorial usage; and his conduct (apart from the implications of paramountcy) has to be regulated by religious and social sanctions, as well as by moral precepts. Through his inherited knowledge and capacity, and his long association with the people, he is able to diagnose their needs and is constrained to respond in the main to their wishes. The people, nobles as well as subjects, are, generally speaking, inspired by a genuine sentiment of loyalty to their ruler, and this is the surest foundation for ordered government in India. The Princes have to take into particular account the susceptibilities and changing outlook of their great nobles, upon whose loyalty and content the stability of their thrones so largely depends.

The Princes are convinced that it is their duty to preserve their traditional systems of government, even though ringed round by democratic provinces, and they must consider anxiously whether, after they have entered a federation, their residuary relations with the Paramount Power will be such as to ensure for their States the support

and protection which they will need in the extra-federal field, in order that their autonomy and treaty rights may be safeguarded; in other words, whether stipulation I will be complied with.

As regards stipulation II, that entry into the federation should be at the discretion of each individual State, the Princes have made it abundantly plain that each Ruler has an individual right to decide whether he will enter a federation or not, and he will not be in a position to exercise that right until the federal picture is complete so that he may estimate how his State will fare under the scheme. In the circumstances, every one who believes in federation as a solution for India's problem must pay a tribute of admiration and respect to those Princes who have laboured with undaunted patience and inexhaustible tact to get the picture set upon the canvas. The Rulers have no doubt realized that it will not be possible for each individual State to preserve discretion as to the terms upon which it will enter a federation. The powers of the federal legislature and executive must be uniform throughout the federal area, and it will, therefore, be necessary for all the States which decide to adhere to the scheme to enter upon the same platform, that is to say, upon terms which will generally be identical for them all. The susceptibilities of the smaller States need to be specially considered, because, apart from the question of the apportionment of representation in the legislature, they fear that federation may entail a larger sacrifice of sovereign rights in their case than in the case of their more powerful brethren. The Princes' leaders have a keen appreciation of the needs of every section of their order, and they have laboured incessantly to preserve a united front.

Stipulation III requires that all matters affecting the

Rulers personally, or their dynasties, should be reserved for decision by the Viceroy as agent of the British Crown. It is uncertain whether the Princes still regard a definition of paramountcy as necessary for the proper maintenance of their relations with the Crown in these matters. If the views recently expressed by certain Princes at Simla on the subject of defining paramountcy do not apply to this aspect of it, the question will then inevitably arise whether a Ruler can ever hope to place himself beyond the scope of intervention by any other means than through the establishment of a system of government responsible to the people; whether the Paramount Power's faculty of intervention is not the surest safeguard against wanton agitation for the abolition of princely rule in a State; and whether the exercise of that faculty by the Viceroy can ever be subjected to precise limitations without gravely endangering the relations of the States with the Crown.

Much learning and eloquence have been employed in expounding the origin, legal significance, and content of paramountcy; but although practice and usage under various heads have been, and will continue to be, clarified and formulated through codification, it is unlikely that any comprehensive and rigid definition of paramountcy will ever be achieved, because the bond between the States and the Crown is organic, having its roots in mutual confidence and partnership in affairs of the Empire. Friction must manifest itself at times, but it is a domestic affair and can best be removed by the application of common sense, by wise and sympathetic alterations in the technique and machinery of political relations, and by strict adherence to the principles of justice in all dealings with the States. It is probable that the misgivings which some of the Princes feel at the moment on the subject of the exercise of paramountcy would be greatly relieved if,

as recommended by the Butler Committee, some really satisfactory system could be devised for obtaining an exhaustive and judicial inquiry into disputes in which the States are parties, particularly in cases where the Crown itself is involved.

Finally, it is certain that, whether in respect of paramountcy or any of the other great issues that are involved in federation, the constitution that will unite and rule India will not be shaped so as to tally with legal theories or the doctrines of political science. Just as in France, in 1815, the allies entered the gates of Paris while the Chamber of Deputies was engaged in discussing and voting on the articles of the constitution, so in India, outside the arena of verbal conflict, the great forces which shape the fate of nations and empires are gathering inexorably.

Chapter XV

THE ORIGIN OF THE ROUND TABLE AND THE LONDON CONFERENCES OF 1930 AND 1931

By THE MOST HON. THE MARQUESS OF ZETLAND, P.C., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

[The Marquess of Zetland, as the Earl of Ronaldshay, travelled extensively in India and the Near and Far East. He sat in the House of Commons from 1907 to 1916 and was a member of the Royal Commission on the Public Services in India, 1912–14. He served as Governor of Bengal for five years from 1917. He was a member of the Round Table Conferences which sat in London in 1930 and 1931, and has written the biography of Lord Curzon of Kedleston as well as numerous works relating to India. Among public posts which he has held are the Presidentships of the Royal Geographical Society and of the Royal Asiatic Society.]

THE first definite and authoritative proposal for a Round Table Conference on the Indian constitutional issue was put forward by Sir John Simon in a letter dated 16 October 1929, to Mr. MacDonald, then Prime Minister in the Labour Government, though before that date the idea of a 'Round Table' had been mooted in India. By that time Sir John Simon and his colleagues on the Commission appointed under the Act of 1919 had been at work on their investigations for more than eighteen months; and as they probed steadily deeper into the complexities of the problem with which they found themselves confronted, they had been driven to the conclusion that no final solution of it was possible which did not take into account the existence of the Indian States. He asked, therefore, on behalf of the Commission, whether His Majesty's Government would approve of such an interpretation of their terms of reference as would enable them to examine the methods by which the future relationship

between the Indian States and the provinces of British India might be adjusted. He explained that, if this were conceded, some revision of the arrangements contemplated after the issue of their report would be necessary; and in order that the States might be consulted he suggested the summoning of 'some sort of Conference' at which His Majesty's Government might meet 'both representatives of British India and representatives of the States for the purpose of seeking the greatest possible measure of agreement for the final proposals which it would later be the duty of His Majesty's Government to submit to Parliament'. To both of these proposals the Prime Minister cordially assented.

The Conference which eventually assembled in London in the autumn of 1930 differed somewhat in form from the model sketched by Sir John Simon in his letter to the Prime Minister. Conditions affecting the development of the plan were far from static, and both in India and in Great Britain influences were at work which played an important part in giving to the Conference the form which it ultimately took. Paradoxically, it was the action of the Indian Nationalists which tended to restrict, during its earlier stages, its representative character, and the influence of the Conservative and Liberal parties in Great Britain which resulted in extending it. A brief reference to the reactions caused in India and in England by the publication of Sir John Simon's letter will serve to make this clear.

In India the idea of a conference on the constitutional problem had been canvassed from time to time for many years past. It might have been supposed, therefore, that the offer of a conference before action was taken on the forthcoming recommendations of Sir John Simon's Commission would have been welcomed by all sections of

opinion in India. The more extreme exponents of Indian nationalism, however, failed to grasp the golden opportunity which was being offered them of taking advantage of the well-known genius of the English people for compromise. It will be recalled that in December 1929, under the influence of Mr. Gandhi, the leading spirits of the Indian National Congress rejected the offer to participate extended to them by Lord Irwin and emphasized their rejection of it by passing resolutions at Lahore claiming complete independence, declaring a boycott of the existing legislatures, and empowering the All-India Congress Committee to launch a programme of civil disobedience at such time as it thought fit. The temper of those constituting the left wing of the Congress at this time is sufficiently indicated by the fact that it was only in face of strong opposition and by a small majority that a resolution was carried condemning the attempt which had been made on the lives of the Viceroy and Lady Irwin only a few days earlier. Any hope which there might still have been of finding a bridge from the folly of Lahore back to the path of sanity was shattered not long afterwards by the launching of the civil disobedience campaign which threw the country into turmoil during the summer of 1930; and it was not, consequently, until the second session of the Round Table Conference in the autumn of 1931, following upon the suspension of the civil disobedience movement in accordance with the agreement reached between Lord Irwin and Mr. Gandhi in the spring of that year, that Mr. Gandhi attended as the sole representative of Congress. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu in other capacities joined the delegates from India at the Conference table.

That is not to say, of course, that the Conference was not, even in its earlier stages, fully representative of the different

communities of India and, with the exception of the more extreme form of nationalism associated with the Congress, of the many interests, racial, social, and political, of the Indian continent. It is desirable to lay stress upon this because at a late stage, even after the Congress itself was represented at the Conference, Mr. Gandhi attempted to place the blame for his failure to effect a settlement of the communal question on the alleged unrepresentative character of the Indian delegation. 'The causes of failure', he asserted, 'were inherent in the composition of the Indian delegation. We are almost all not elected representatives of the parties or groups whom we are presumed to represent; we are here by nomination of the Government. Nor are those whose presence was absolutely necessary for an agreed solution to be found here.' The fallacy underlying this contention was effectively exposed by Dr. Ambedkar, who at once produced proof of his right to speak for the depressed classes, and by the late Sir Muhammad Shafi, who pointed out that the leaders of all the recognized political parties in India were present at the Conference, and that though they might not be, in actual fact, the elected representatives of these bodies, they had, nevertheless, been selected only after consultation with the working committees of the various organizations concerned.

Let us now turn for a moment to events in England. The influences at work behind the scenes which eventually gave to the British delegation a far more representative character than had at first been contemplated were of a different kind. Sir John Simon's original proposal had been that the British Government should meet delegates from British India and from the Indian States, not necessarily together, for discussion. It so happened that the Government at the time was drawn from a party which was in an actual minority in the House of Commons;

and to a group of persons who had viewed with varying feelings the decision to hold a Conference, but who had this in common, that they had all been associated in one way or another with British rule in India, it seemed that it would be better from every point of view if all three political parties in England were represented at the Conference table. It was held, with some reason, that if the settlement of the Indian problem was to possess the elements of permanency, it must be, so far as Great Britain was concerned, a national and not a party settlement. Representations in this sense were made to the Prime Minister through the party leaders, with the result that all three parties were represented on the British delegation.

With the stage thus set and the cast chosen, the question of procedure became a matter for serious consideration. Were decisions to be taken by vote? In view of the relative numerical insignificance of the British delegations, it was obvious that such a course was impracticable; and since the Conference was not a constituent body charged with the task of drafting a constitution, but a gathering of Indians and Englishmen called into consultation with the object of seeking the greatest possible measure of agreement on the proposals which the Government would eventually have to lay before Parliament, it was decided that the general sense of the Conference on the main issues which came before it should be ascertained and noted. This being the position, it will be seen that the most that could be expected from the deliberations of the Conference would be a general consensus of opinion on questions of principle. And it will clear the ground for a consideration of the claims and counter-claims which had to be met before any general agreement was reached, if I sum up now in the broadest possible outline the conclusions at which the Conference arrived.

Of the first importance was the conclusion that the future constitution of India must be so framed as to embrace the Indian States as well as British India. What the Conference pictured was a pyramid the base of which was to consist of the provinces of British India on the one hand and the Indian States on the other. On this base was to be erected a federal legislature composed of representatives of British India and of the Indian States with a federal executive responsible to it in the same sense that the Cabinet in Great Britain is responsible to Parliament. The actual planning of the base on which the superstructure was to rest was not completed, for it was not found possible during the two sessions of the Conference for the States to settle amongst themselves their exact place in the federation and their mutual relationships within it. But so far as British India was concerned, it was agreed that there should be a considerable extension of the democratic principle, and that the provinces which were to constitute the British Indian units of the federation should be responsibly governed entities, enjoying the greatest possible measure of freedom from outside interference and dictation in carrying out their own policies within their own sphere.

It was further generally agreed that while a federal constitution on the lines suggested was the goal that was aimed at, it was one that could not be reached at a single stride, and that for some time to come the members of the Government holding the portfolios of defence and foreign affairs should be responsible not to the central Indian legislature but to the Viceroy. These two subjects were to be regarded as 'reserved' in the sense in which the word 'reserved' is used in the case of the provincial governments as constituted under the Act of 1919.

It was also agreed that the Governor-General should be

armed with special powers in connexion with certain other subjects affecting the interests of minorities and of members of the public services, the financial stability of the country, and the maintenance of peace and tranquillity throughout the land. The special powers contemplated for these purposes were the right to be accorded to the Viceroy to act on his own initiative in responsibility to Parliament instead of to the Indian legislature, combined, as a necessary consequence, with the right to appropriate revenue and to legislate, should the circumstances demand it, over the heads of the legislature. How were these broad but tremendously important conclusions reached? It is with that question that this chapter is, in the main, concerned, and it will be readily understood that there were conflicting interests of no mean order to be reconciled before agreement even on general principles could be reached.

The picture conjured up in the minds of many by the conception of an All-India federation bringing into a single glittering edifice the democratically governed provinces of British India and the autocratically governed territories of the Ruling Princes was a pleasing one. Those who planned it saw in imagination the immense and bewildering heterogeneities of the Indian continent—those formidable and stubborn obstacles to nationhood—vanishing under the magic dome of a political edifice which was to defy the centrifugal tendencies inherent in the circumstances of the Indian continent and to give to its many-tongued and many-visaged peoples a hitherto undreamed-of measure of cohesion. The long days of discussion at the Conference table showed how great were the practical difficulties standing in the way of the realization of the ideal. Let us consider them.

It was realized from the first that three questions of

paramount importance must dominate the work of the conference; they were these. In the first place, how were the autocratically governed States of feudatory India to be dovetailed into a constitution the avowed object of which was to democratize still further the system under which the provinces of British India already enjoyed a measure of representative self-government? Secondly, what provision was to be made under a system of popular self-government to safeguard the position of the Muslims and other minorities? And thirdly, to what extent, if at all, was the principle of an executive responsible to a popularly elected assembly to be conceded in the case of the central Government, hitherto known as the Government of India and the keystone of British rule in that country? The first of these questions was hedged around with obvious difficulties for the Princes, and, as has already been indicated, remained without an answer when the Conference stood adjourned. The second question was for Indians of all shades of opinion a stumbling-block of the most intractable nature on the road which they were anxious to travel, and, like the first question, remained unanswered. The third question was a source of no little embarrassment to the British representatives. Let me explain the difficulty.

Conservative opinion in Great Britain—and I use the word 'conservative' in its wider rather than in its party implication, for the view was shared by the Liberal delegation—held that while large changes from a semi-bureaucratic to a parliamentary form of government were taking place in the Indian provinces, it was essential that a strong, stable government should be in control at the centre. This view had been put forward with great emphasis in the report of the Simon Commission, which was recognized in Great Britain as a State document of the highest authority, whose conclusions and recommendations were

entitled to the utmost respect. It had been powerfully reinforced by what to the Englishman appeared to be a lamentable lack of any sense of responsibility displayed by leading members of the Legislative Assembly during recent events in India. And but for an unforseen change which the situation underwent as a result of the dramatic intervention of the Princes at the very beginning of the Conference, the controversy over this question might well have proved a rock on which the Conference itself might have split. Let us, therefore, consider this question first.

It was, of course, obvious from the first that the vast majority of the representatives of British India would press for the greatest possible measure of responsibility at the centre. Their ideal was a parliamentary system modelled as closely as circumstances would permit on that of Great Britain. What they pictured in place of the existing Government was an Indian Cabinet composed of members drawn from an Indian Parliament to which they would be responsible in the same way that the Cabinet in London are responsible to the House of Commons. True, there was the difficulty of the share in the control of the administration to be accorded to communities, notably, of course, the Muslim community, of great importance historically, politically, and even numerically, yet doomed in the nature of things to remain a permanent minority in the body politic. But the Indian mind has a striking facility for working in compartments; and, so long as they were engaged in urging their case for parliamentary government, the advocates of Indian Home Rule at the Conference table dismissed from their minds the obstacles standing in its way. Thus speech after speech during the opening days of the Conference, whether it was delivered by a Brahmin or a member of the depressed classes, by a Hindu or a Muslim, by a Sikh or an Indian Christian,

was well calculated to create the impression that the delegates from India were unanimous in their pursuit of a single goal; and it was only when the curtain dropped after the first act and the real work of the Conference began behind closed doors, that the conflict of interests among them was disclosed and that discordances made themselves heard.

The western mind is less accommodating; it does not ignore facts; on the contrary it attaches the utmost importance to them. It is, that is to say, realistic rather than idealistic in its outlook. And there were facts within the knowledge of all who were familiar with the actual work of administration in India which, in their view, constituted serious obstacles to any immediate transfer of control from Westminster to an Indian Parliament at Delhi. The existence of the minorities was one such fact; the avowedly hostile attitude of the Indian National Congress towards Great Britain was another. Yet while the British delegates, or those among them, at any rate, who represented the more cautious and conservative trend of opinion in Great Britain, hesitated to take the risks involved in any large transfer of control from the British to an Indian Parliament, they were not blind to the difficulties which had grown up and were clogging the machinery of government under the existing system. The most cursory study of the position in which the Government of India had found itself in recent times was sufficient to make clear the nature of the obstacles which stood in the way of its functioning smoothly or efficiently. Its position was, in fact, that of a small bureaucratic body subjected to the powerful influence of a popularly elected Assembly, yet responsible, not to the body in whose eyes it had to justify its every action, but to Parliament in Great Britain. It was not difficult to picture the sort of dilemma in which, in such circumstances, the

executive only too often found itself. Whenever a measure came up on which the executive and the legislature were at variance, there was one of three courses open to it: it could flout the legislature, it could attempt to effect a compromise with it, or it could give way to it. No one of these courses could be anything but unsatisfactory. If it flouted the legislature, it laid itself open to a widespread and vehement agitation on the platform and in the press, in which it was depicted as a callous and irresponsible bureaucracy riding roughshod over the will of an expostulating but helpless people. If it was successful in effecting a compromise, it pleased neither itself nor its critics, whereas if it bowed to the will of the legislature, it acquiesced in something of which it disapproved and laid itself open to the obvious taunt that it was vacillating and weak. Outstanding examples of the disastrous consequence of this state of affairs had been provided within recent times by the Rupee Ratio Act and the tariff measure with its provision for a preference to Lancashire.

How, then, was this outstanding weakness of the existing system to be overcome? In theory the arguments in favour of the solution urged by the Indian delegates, namely, the creation of an executive responsible to the legislature, were unassailable. But theory took no account of the facts which the British delegates were unable to ignore—the existence of the minorities in India, and the avowed hostility of those who claimed to represent the people of India and who, if their claim had any basis in fact, would dominate the legislature and consequently the executive also. Would Great Britain, in face of her responsibilities not only to her own nationals but to the minorities and to the great mass of the Indian peasantry, be justified in taking the risks involved? That was the question which obtruded itself insistently upon the attention

of the British delegation when the curtain was rung up upon the Conference in November 1930.

It was at this stage that the intervention of the Princes, to which reference has been made, gave to the question an entirely different aspect. Neither the Simon Commission nor the Government of India had regarded a federation of the Indian States and the provinces of British India as a possibility of the immediate future. And the surprise which the opening days of the Conference had in store, namely, a declaration by the Princes that they were prepared to consider the immediate establishment of a federal form of government in which they would have a share, was the outcome of a series of private discussions which took place between the Princes and their advisers during the voyage from India and were continued behind closed doors amid a somewhat extended circle in London before the curtain was lifted on the Conference itself. It was obvious that the complexion of a Government consisting of a federal legislature and executive in which the Indian States would participate would differ materially from that of a Government drawn solely from British India and dominated by the outlook of the Congress party. For while the left wing of the Congress had adopted complete independence as its goal, the Maharaja of Bikaner had declared at the outset of the Conference that first and foremost in the policies of the Indian States was 'an unflinching and unqualified loyalty to the Throne'. And no one doubted that a federal legislature formed on the lines suggested would possess elements of stability which were lacking in the existing Legislative Assembly. The Princes on their part made it clear that, while they accepted the necessity for safeguards and guarantees, especially during the period of transition, they were not prepared to delegate 'any of their sovereign powers' unless and until they could share them

honourably and fully with British India. 'We can only federate with a British India which is self-governing, and not with a British India governed as it is at present', declared the Maharaja of Patiala; and the Maharaja of Bikaner made it equally clear that the Princes would not join a federation 'with responsibility to Parliament' in Great Britain.

It was these considerations which, in the view of those who had been opposed to any large change in the case of the central Government, weighed down the scale in favour of the introduction of some measure of responsibility there. 'These opinions (i.e. in favour of the introduction of responsibility at the centre) were not, as some have suggested,' declared Lord Reading, 'the result of impulse or sudden conversion; they began to take shape immediately federation was launched and were only formed after protracted thought and as the result of profound conviction.' And it was only on the assumption that the future legislature and executive were to be constituted on an All-India basis that, in December 1931, Parliament endorsed the policy agreed to at the Round Table Conference.

It was, of course, inevitable that opinion should differ widely as to the extent of the restrictions which, in the first instance at any rate, were to be imposed on the operation of the principle of responsibility, and it was only as the result of many days of discussion during both sessions of the Conference that the Prime Minister was able to formulate the policy of the Government on this all-important matter. The principle of responsibility, he stated, was to be subject to the qualification that in existing circumstances, 'Defence and External Affairs must be reserved to the Governor-General and that in regard to finance such conditions must apply as will ensure the fulfilment of the obligations incurred under the authority of

the Secretary of State and the maintenance unimpaired of the financial stability and credit of India'. Mr. MacDonald added that, in the view of the British Government, the Governor-General must be granted the necessary powers to enable him to fulfil his responsibility for securing the observance of the constitutional rights of minorities and for ultimately maintaining the tranquillity of the State.

It may be said, then, that the Conference had achieved much in reaching common ground acceptable both to the British Government and to Parliament on one at least of the most controversial issues which came before it. It has to be observed, however, that before decisions could be reached on the question of the composition of the federal legislature, it was essential that some agreement should be reached as to the share to be accorded in it to minority communities. And this brings me to the second of the three questions which dominated the work of the Conference, a question whose solution, as I have already pointed out, was primarily the concern of the Indian delegates. Let that be perfectly clear. The British delegation were anxious to do everything in their power, by putting forward suggestions and by encouraging negotiation between the representatives of the different communities, to secure an agreement; but it was only amongst the Indian delegates themselves that an agreement with any prospect of permanency could be reached. And it has to be admitted that so far as the main issue is concerned—that between the Muslims and the Hindus, complicated in one important province by the claims of the Sikhs—success eluded their grasp. The most that was achieved in the direction of a solution of the minorities problem was an agreement reached by representatives of the Muslims, the depressed classes, the Indian Christians, the Anglo-Indians, and the

European commercial community on the safeguards suitable in each case, including the extent and manner of their representation in the various legislatures, provincial and central. But these latter proposals were accepted neither by the Hindus nor by the Sikhs, and the outstanding difference—that between the Muslims and the Hindus—remained unresolved. The failure was viewed with profound regret by all—not least by the British delegates, since it imposed upon the British Government the invidious task of devising a *modus vivendi* until such time as the parties themselves may come to an agreement. This task was actually performed by the communal decision of August 1932. But to no one who was familiar with the question which has been dealt with in Chapters V and VI of this volume did the failure to agree cause surprise. The Muslim delegates, conscious of the disadvantage at which they must find themselves under any system of popular self-government, clung tenaciously to such aids towards self-assertion—communal electorates, for example—as had already been conceded to them, and grasped at such additional means of safeguarding their position as ingenuity could devise. This was apparent throughout the sittings of the Round Table Conference. Discussion had not proceeded far, for instance, before it became clear that there were two distinct schools of thought as to the meaning of federation. Was the process by which federation was to be arrived at to be a dual process or was it to be a single process? In other words, were the provinces of British India to form a federation of their own and the Indian States a federation of their own, and was a joint council of some sort then to be formed of the two constituent bodies thus created? Or were the British Indian provinces and the Indian States (or rather, since there are in all some 700 States, groups of States) to be regarded as the component

units of a single central federal body? Generally speaking, the Hindus of British India inclined towards the first of these two alternatives; the Muslims, the majority of the Princes, and the British delegates towards the latter. In the former alternative, control in the case of British India would be vested very largely in the central body, whereas in the latter alternative a far greater measure of power would lie with the provinces. And it was easy to understand why the Muslims ranged themselves solidly on the side of this type of federal structure. There were certain provinces in which Muslim influence was predominant, whereas in British India as a whole the Muslims could never hope to be in anything but a minority. Hence the vigour with which they pressed for a status for the North-West Frontier Province equal to that of the other provincial units of British India and for the creation of a separate province in the case of Sind. It must be obvious, indeed, to any one who glances at the map of India that a chain of provinces predominantly Muslim in outlook and authority, stretching across the north-west of India from the ocean to the confines of Afghanistan and Kashmir, must provide a basis of great strength and influence to the Muslim community generally.

But if the Muslims were successful in carrying the Conference with them so far, they were less successful, as will have been gathered from what has already been written, in securing its assent to other claims which they put forward. Whether separate electorates were to be maintained; whether, and if so, how much, 'weightage' was to be allowed them in the legislatures in those provinces in which they formed a minority of the population; what was to be the extent of their representation in the two immensely important provinces of Bengal and the Punjab, and finally in the federal legislature itself—all these questions were the

subject of endless, of vehement and, unfortunately, of fruitless discussion and negotiation.

Towards the end of the first session of the Conference the Muslim delegates considered it necessary to utter a warning as to what their attitude must be in the event of their demands being rejected. In such circumstances, they declared, no advance would be possible or practicable, whether in the provinces or in the central Government. And after the protracted negotiations which marked the opening weeks of the second session had ended in failure, the Muslim delegates sat silent spectators of the subsequent proceedings, refusing to discuss the details of a constitution in which, in the absence of a satisfactory settlement of their claims, they declared themselves unable to take a share. In these circumstances it was impossible for the Conference to discuss effectively the nature of the federal executive and its precise relationship to the legislature.

There were other important parts of the federal picture which the Conference left unpainted. There was, for example, the question of the franchise, entrusted eventually to a Committee appointed to investigate and report upon it under the chairmanship of Lord Lothian. Amongst the delegates themselves sharp differences existed, and the report of the sub-committee of the Conference charged with the consideration of the question, brief though it was and couched in the most general terms, was punctuated in almost every paragraph with notes of dissent. Dr. Ambedkar, Mr. Joshi, the late Mr. K. T. Paul (a representative of the Indian Christians), and others associated with them, had a perfectly clear and logical idea as to the basis on which the future constitution should rest. What they demanded in the name of democracy was an elective system under which every adult man and woman would have a vote. For them the facts that, if Russia be excluded,

British India nearly equals Europe and is peopled by 250 millions; that nine out of every ten of these masses of humanity live in villages scattered widely over a countryside almost incredibly vast; that few of the half million villages in which they dwell are approached even by a metalled road and that still fewer are within reasonable distance of a railway; that while amongst them they speak an immense number of languages, scarcely one in ten is capable of understanding the written word of any language —all these facts were to Mr. Joshi and his friends wholly irrelevant to the question. In a note of dissent from the recommendation made by the sub-committee in favour of an increase in the electorate of from 10 to 25 per cent. of the total population, they stated that any such increase was 'quite inadequate', and added that in their view 'the immediate introduction of adult suffrage' was 'both practicable and desirable'. A totally different view of the meaning of 'responsible' self-government was taken by other Indian delegates, and notably by the representatives of the wealthy trading and professional classes of Bombay. Their ideas were cast in a much more aristocratic mould. This method of government by mere counting of heads—especially when the vast majority of heads, unlike their own, were empty, uneducated heads—seemed to them to be the last word in foolishness. In their view, if there must indeed be more votes, some system of indirect election would be preferable. Hence they, like Mr. Joshi and his friends, dissented from the recommendation of the Franchise sub-committee of the Conference, but for an entirely different reason. Their dissent was framed in these words: 'We dissent from these proposals and consider that the basis of the franchise should be broadened, if at all, by another system.' It may be added that Lord Lothian's Committee, which spent three months in India

investigating the matter early in 1932, came to the conclusion that adult suffrage was impracticable, but made proposals which they estimated would enfranchise 36 millions out of an adult population of 133 millions, the proportion of adult males obtaining the vote being 43·4 and of adult females 10·5 in British India.[1]

But despite the many differences which existed on nearly every one of the more important questions which came under review, it may be claimed for the Conference that it did much to pave the way for a reasonable solution of the unprecedented problem with which it was called upon to deal. That many of its findings were the outcome of compromise was inevitable, and during its closing days speculation was rife as to what the final attitude of the Congress party towards them would be. Had the Congress representatives come to the Conference with a genuine desire to negotiate a settlement, or were they there bent solely upon an attempt to dictate?

The final sitting of the Conference began on the morning of 30 November 1931. On the left of the Prime Minister sat Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, poetess and politician, an impressive figure in the ample folds of her national costume. On her left was to be seen the huddled figure of Mr. Gandhi swathed in many folds of homespun cotton cloth, and beyond him again Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and other members of the various sections of the Hindu community. On the right of the Prime Minister were the members of the British delegation and beyond them again the Ruling Princes. Facing the chair, seated at the inner lap of the huge oblong table, were Dr. Ambedkar, the chief spokesman of the depressed classes; Mr. Joshi, the thorough-going champion of Indian labour and ardent advocate of adult suffrage for the 250,000,000 of British

[1] *Report of the Indian Franchise Committee* (Cmd. 4086, 1932), p. 42.

India; Sir Hubert Carr and other representatives of the British mercantile community and the spokesmen of other minorities. Behind them again at the outer ring of the table sat the representatives of the 77,000,000 Muslims under the leadership of His Highness the Aga Khan. It happened to be Mr. Gandhi's weekly day of silence, and as speaker after speaker rose to deliver his final speech the chief Congress representative sat brooding at the table, a mute, intractable, and enigmatic figure. The day wore slowly on towards its close and at length, a little after midnight, his period of silence over, Mr. Gandhi addressed the Conference. There was little encouragement to be derived either from his speech on this occasion, which from beginning to end was shot through with bitterness, or from his reception of the statement made by the Prime Minister in bringing the proceedings to a close at midday on the 1st of December. Mr. MacDonald's speech was a straightforward and wholly unambiguous summing up of the position of the Government with regard to the findings of the Conference; not so Mr. Gandhi's comment on it. He would refrain from expressing any opinion on it, Mr. Gandhi said, but would search for the 'hidden meaning' underlying it. And those who had watched him closely throughout the sittings of the Conference had little doubt that he was even now contemplating a return to the barren wilderness of non-co-operation. That their belief was only too well founded was proved within a few days of his return to India; but the developments there lie beyond the scope of this chapter.[1]

[1] For the announcement of a third Round Table Conference, see p. 315.

Chapter XVI

POLITICAL FORCES AT WORK DURING 1932

By F. H. BROWN, C.I.E.

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AFTER the close of the second Round Table Conference in December 1931 events moved rapidly and Government policy was clearly defined and resolutely pursued. Strenuous efforts were made by the Congress, by the Frontier 'Red Shirts', and by Bengali anarchists to subvert lawful authority and coerce the people. Government measures for the defeat of these aims were accompanied by steadfast perseverance in the path to constitutional reform on the lines which had been broadly sketched out at the Conference. This dual policy, though attacked on both sides by sections of opinion, found a large measure of support both in Great Britain and in India. The precedent of such twofold purpose a quarter of a century earlier under a Radical Government was recalled. But in the intervening years the menace to the future of India from political and communal unreason assumed altogether greater proportions, and the constitutional changes now in contemplation were on lines so far-reaching that they had not been envisaged, by the authors of the Morley-Minto reforms, as within the range of practical politics.

In pursuance of the Irwin-Gandhi Pact of March 1931 Lord Willingdon's Government had sought peace and ensued it, but the Congress leaders had taken action which showed that they looked upon the instrument as a

convenient armistice during which they might lay plans for further subversive activities, and many of these were developed during Mr. Gandhi's absence in London at the second Round Table Conference. In the words of a Government statement issued at the beginning of 1932, the leaders of the movement 'had missed no opportunity to exploit the economic situation' and they had 'pursued a policy of intimidation and coercion'. The falling prices of food grains offered favourable ground for stirring up the peasant cultivators, especially in the United Provinces, where a no-rent campaign was undertaken. The Red Shirt movement on the inflammable frontier under Abdul Ghaffar Khan took a semi-military form, constituting a very grave menace to public security, but was deliberately encouraged by the Congress. In Bengal the endemic terrorist movement was gaining ground with frequent assassinations of Government officials; consequently in November 1931 a drastic Bengal ordinance was issued. Before the year closed ordinances were also promulgated against the no-rent campaign in the United Provinces and the Red Shirt movement.

At the last sitting of the second Round Table Conference, on 1 December 1931, Mr. Gandhi had hinted his fear that so far as he was concerned they had come to the parting of the ways—a synonym for the revival of civil disobedience. On return to India, as indicated in Chapter XI, he wrote to Lord Willingdon asking for an interview to discuss the ordinances and the general political situation. The Viceroy replied that he was willing to discuss with Mr. Gandhi the maintenance of co-operation in the work of constitutional reform, but not the measures which had been found necessary for the preservation of the essentials of government. On the last night of 1931 the Congress Working Committee, headed by Mr. Gandhi,

decided to revive civil disobedience, to boycott British goods, and to restart picketing. The situation was met on 4 January by the promulgation of four ordinances of general application, giving the Government far-reaching special powers. Mr. Gandhi was arrested at Bombay on the same day and detained in Yeravda jail, Poona, under a Bombay Regulation of 1827. Other Congress leaders were imprisoned; steps were taken to close Congress offices, to sequester their funds, and to prevent as far as possible new contributions to them. The regrettable necessity for such measures was recognized by the joint author of the 1931 pact, Lord Irwin. He said in a speech at Leeds on 27 January 1932 that the responsibility for the upheaval lay with the Congress party, and that their position was both unnecessary and unjustifiable. He did not suppose that if he had still been in India he would have acted any differently from the way Lord Willingdon had done. Government were right in pursuing what had always been the dual policy of maintaining law and order on the one side and progressive, generous constitution-building on the other.

While Government were able to maintain the initiative in the rest of India, the situation in Bengal continued intractable. The anarchists pursued their misdirected way with a religious fervour which made light of the risk to their own lives, and not infrequently after committing an assassination or attempting to do so the terrorist took his (or her) own life by poison. Though highly-placed Government servants were the chief targets, and the police and police-court witnesses were in special danger, non-officials were not spared. Both Mr. Edward Villiers, President of the European Association, and Sir Alfred Watson, editor of *The Statesman*, had narrow escapes—the latter twice within six weeks. There was a peculiarly

daring raid at the European Institute at Chittagong during a social gathering on the night of 24 September 1932, when an elderly European woman was killed and several persons were injured. Yet for months Chittagong had been a centre of government efforts to repress terrorism, and in addition to a large force of extra police, two battalions of troops were engaged in the district in an attempt to round up absconders from the raid on the armoury in April 1930. Political dacoities, mail robberies, and thefts of arms and ammunition continued.

Among other measures to ease the situation, arrangements were made for a considerable number of detenus to be kept in jails outside the province, and there was resumption of the practice of transporting convicts found guilty of terrorist crime to the Andamans. At the beginning of the 1932–3 cold weather season, two infantry brigades, comprising six Indian battalions and a British battalion, were moved to Bengal, to assist the civil administration and to encourage the populace to resist and help to defeat terrorism. In discussions on the menacing situation in the Legislative Council at the end of September 1932, suggestions were made that Bengal should remain outside the proposed new constitution till terrorism had been overcome. A number of Bengali Muslim members of the Indian legislature issued a statement to the effect that the community is prepared to support the Government in any and every measure it may take for crushing the efforts of Bengali Hindu anarchists to set up a Hindu tyranny by methods that befoul the country's good name. The statement recommended either the exclusion of Bengal for the time being from the constitutional changes, or a revision of the communal award on specified lines. Prominent Muslim, Hindu, and European members of the provincial legislature made plans early in

October for counter propaganda. The Bengal ordinance was renewed and in some respects strengthened on its expiry in May 1932, and a few months later many of its provisions were incorporated in the ordinary law by an Act of the provincial legislature.

Outside Bengal the main problem of authority was the countering of the civil disobedience movement. There were serious disturbances from time to time, particularly in Bombay City, which continued to be an outstanding centre of Congress activity, notably in restraint of liberty to trade. Even a supporter of *swaraj* so ardent as Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, a leading business man, was constrained to declare in October that Congress action 'was totally opposed to all principles of economy, sanity, and commercial morality'. Taking the country as a whole, it cannot be said that there were marked and general reactions against the policy of fighting the civil disobedience movement. From various quarters Government were urged to negotiate with Mr. Gandhi and the other Congress leaders; but Lord Willingdon adhered to the view that he could not treat with them so long as the policy of civil disobedience was maintained. The Secretary of State for India (Sir Samuel Hoare) stated in the House of Commons on 29 April 1932 that there could be no question of co-operation with any one associated with the movement. 'One thing is quite clear, that there will be no question of making a bargain with the Congress as a condition of its co-operation.'

The situation had so improved at the end of the six months' validity of the ordinances that Government was able to modify and consolidate them in Ordinance X of 1932, comprising eighty sections, of which only eight were of general application. No parts of the remaining sections were operative except by notification by provincial

Governments, and as a matter of fact in most of British India it was unnecessary to put any of them into force. In the autumn session of the central legislature at Simla a Bill was promoted for the incorporation in the criminal law of certain parts of the ordinance, including provisions against associations dangerous to the public peace, against certain forms of intimidation, and to secure greater control over the press. In some of the provincial legislatures there were measures to reproduce provisions of the ordinance which local conditions appeared to demand. These steps were held to be essential for bringing the civil disobedience movement to an end, and as an insurance against the renewal of any similar activities. In the first two months of the revival of the movement there were 32,000 convictions, mainly for minor offences; but thereafter the number of prosecutions steadily fell. Up to the end of September over 41,000 of the total of 61,000 persons sentenced had been released. It may be noted, too, that there was remarkable improvement in the financial credit of the Indian Government, due largely to growth of confidence in its strength of purpose. Both sterling and rupee loans were raised at much lower rates than previously, and were largely over-subscribed. On 1 October 1932 the price of 3½ per cent. India Stock (to give but one example) was 84¾ as compared with 49 a year earlier.

The constructive side of the dual policy of Government was pursued with a determination to avoid needless delay that at one stage caused embarrassment, by reason of the doubts and fears of some of the co-operating sections of opinion. On the morrow of the Round Table Conference both Houses of Parliament after long and anxious debate approved the Indian policy of His Majesty's Government as set forth in the Prime Minister's speech to the Conference. Meanwhile the Burma Round Table Conference

at St. James's Palace was finishing its work, and on 12 January 1932, at the final sitting, the Prime Minister announced the Government's intention, in the event of Burma electing to pursue her political development apart from India, to place responsibility upon a bicameral legislature for the administration not only of subjects which will fall within the range of provincial governments in India, but also of subjects which will be administered there by the central authority. In September Lord Willingdon announced that the financial aspects of separation had been further examined with a view to stating the case for reference to a tribunal commanding general confidence in India and in Burma.

The month of January also saw the formal announcement of the intention to bring the North-West Frontier Province into constitutional parity with other provinces. The new status was formally inaugurated by the Viceroy on 20 April. The elections were held, not without disquieting moments, but on the whole with satisfactory results. Lord Willingdon was able to state in the central legislature in September that from these results he could draw a moral that was not confined to the frontier alone. 'In place of dissatisfaction we have contentment and the course is set fair for orderly and harmonious progress.' Consideration was further given to the question of Sind becoming a separate province, and in June a conference, which had been convened for the purpose of trying to overcome the financial difficulties, submitted its report. In May there appeared the report of the committee which had investigated the implications of setting up a separate Orissa province.

The terms of reference to the three committees which were to carry out inquiries in India were announced in letters from the Prime Minister to the respective chairmen

published in January on the eve of their departure. The report first made available, early in May, was that of the Federal Finance Committee under the chairmanship of Lord Eustace Percy, M.P. (Cmd. 4069, 1932), which was required to subject to the test of figures the classification of revenues suggested at the Conference. The broad general conclusion reached was that, given recovery from present abnormal economic conditions, and taking the year 1935–6 as a suitable datum line, the financial scheme outlined by Lord Peel's subcommittee of the Federal Structure Committee 'provides a foundation on which an Indian federation can be established and can begin to work'.

The report of the Franchise Committee (Cmd. 4086, 1932), under the chairmanship of Lord Lothian, published early in June, aroused the keenest interest. The outstanding recommendation was the increase of the aggregate electorate from 7 millions to 36 millions. Adult franchise was dismissed as impracticable owing to the dearth of officials qualified to work such a scheme, and the enormous numbers involved. Electoral qualifications were to be based on property, as hitherto, and also on education. Additional qualifications were suggested for women which would give them a voting strength of about one-fifth of the whole, and proposals were made for the reservation of a certain number of seats for them. For the central legislature the Committee endorsed the Round Table proposal that the British Indian members of the Senate should be elected by the provincial legislatures. For the Federal Assembly they proposed the increase of the British Indian quota from the 200 recommended by the Federal Structure Committee to 300, in order to reduce the size of the constituencies.

Lastly, towards the end of July, came the report of the

Indian States Enquiry (Davidson) Committee (Cmd. 4103, 1932). The report, to which reference is made in Chapter XIV, traced the origins and development of relations between the Indian States and the British Government, and laid down principles upon which there might be equitable financial adjustments for formulating the details of federation.

In January a consultative committee of nineteen influential members of the Round Table Conference was nominated under the chairmanship of the Viceroy as deputy for the Prime Minister. Its function was to co-operate with His Majesty's Government in filling up gaps in the constitution so far sketched, where these were due to differences of opinion in the Conference or to limitations imposed by lack of time upon its investigations. Though the committee was hampered by the absence of both official and non-official British representatives—for the Viceroy was not himself a participant in the discussions—some amount of detailed work was done in Delhi. The consideration of major issues, however, was continually impeded by the refusal of Muslim members to discuss them in the absence of a settlement of the communal question. Meanwhile both in India and in London various difficult questions were engaging constant attention. A small committee was sitting frequently in Whitehall under the chairmanship of Lord Sankey, the Lord Chancellor.

An outstanding question of procedure, much debated, was whether or not a Parliamentary Bill for provincial autonomy should be the first stage in the legislative process. On 27 June 1932 the Secretary of State for India announced in the House of Commons that His Majesty's Government had decided to endeavour to give effect to their policy in a single Bill providing alike for provincial

autonomy and for the federation of Indian provinces and States; enabling new provincial constitutions to be set up 'without necessarily awaiting the completion of all steps required for the actual inauguration of federation'. Subsequently Lord Willingdon justly described this decision as being in accord with the great mass of Indian political opinion.

The Secretary of State further announced on 27 June the intention of the Cabinet, after they had formulated their specific recommendations for Indian constitutional reform, to set up a Joint Select Committee of Parliament to examine these proposals in consultation with Indian representatives. He said that His Majesty's Government hoped in the interests of speed that no further formal discussions would be necessary in London before these proposals were formulated, but that they were prepared to arrange for such discussions if the deliberations in India of the consultative committee proved less conclusive than was hoped. There were complaints by the Labour opposition in Parliament and by a number of Indian politicians who had been at the Conference that, if a procedure of this nature were adopted, the method of free and equal consultation with India would be abandoned in favour of the method of external deliberation and decision. The underlying objection was that by the time the Joint Parliamentary Committee was set up the principal points would have been settled without an opportunity for the exercise of the full weight of Indian opinion. There were resignations from the consultative committee. Subsequent explanations by the Secretary of State did not remove Indian anxieties, and a few weeks later Government fell back upon the alternative alluded to in the statement. Lord Willingdon announced to the Indian Legislature on 5 September that His Majesty's Government proposed

to invite a small body of representatives of the States and British India to meet them in London about the middle of November. They intended by this means to make an earnest attempt to reach an agreement consistent with the declared policy of Government upon the important questions that remained to be decided. Whilst the status of the Indian representatives would be the same as that of the delegates at the Conference, the character of the discussions and the stages which had now been reached necessitated less formal and more expeditious procedure than that adopted at its two sessions. Government felt that this result would be best achieved by avoiding any public sittings and by working on a fixed agenda. The object of the discussions would be to arrive at an agreement upon as large a number of points as possible. The Government would subsequently present for the consideration of the Joint Select Committee and of Parliament its specific recommendations, including the points which had been agreed, and would, of course, support them.

This announcement was accepted by the Liberal leaders as opening the way to continued British and Indian discussion on a basis of equality. It came only three weeks after the issue of the communal award of His Majesty's Government in relation to the provincial Legislative Councils, which is outlined in Chapter VI. Government had repeatedly expressed their conviction that the only really satisfactory settlement would be one devised and accepted by the communities concerned. It was with great reluctance that, as a result of the repeated failures of all attempts for years past at direct settlement between the communities, Government decided in March, at the unanimous request of the consultative committee, to make a provisional award. It was intimated that, if the settlement was considered unsatisfactory by some or all

communities, it must henceforth hold the field unless Indians should produce some alternative generally acceptable among themselves. Government stated unequivocally that 'they themselves can be no party to any negotiations which may be initiated with a view to revising their decision and will not be prepared to give consideration to any representations aimed at securing modification of it which is not supported by all the parties affected'. In the event of such agreement being achieved, His Majesty's Government would undertake to recommend to Parliament that any practical alternative that might be agreed upon mutually by the parties concerned in the interval should be substituted in the Bill for the provisional scheme.

The effort to deal justly with so many conflicting claims naturally met with criticisms from different points of view. The Sikhs of the Punjab, in particular, did not conceal their bitter dissatisfaction at the limited extent to which their 'weightage' claim had been met. Absence of enthusiasm for the scheme on the part of any community was in itself an indication of its meticulous fairness. It resulted, however, in the complication of a perplexing personal issue by the dramatic return of Mr. Gandhi, still a prisoner at Yeravda, to the centre of the Indian political stage.

More than five months before the issue of the award, Mr. Gandhi had written to the Secretary of State expressing his strong objection to the erection of separate electorates for the depressed classes, and intimating that in the event of such electorates being set up, he must 'fast unto death'. He said that this was a call of conscience which he dared not disobey even though it might cost whatever reputation for sanity he might possess. The Secretary of State replied on 13 April that His Majesty's Government had not received all the material which must

be before them when a decision was taken, and that due regard would then be paid to all the factors.

On 18 August, the day following the publication of the award, Mr. Gandhi wrote to the Prime Minister stating that he must resist the decision in respect to the depressed classes with his life. From 20 September he would enter upon a perpetual fast from food of any kind, but the fast would cease if during its course the British Government withdrew their scheme of communal electorates for the depressed classes. In a considered reply dated 8 September the Prime Minister pointed out that the advantage initially given in the scheme to the depressed classes by means of a limited number of special constituencies for the first twenty years, in addition to their normal electoral rights in the general Hindu constituencies, was wholly different in conception and effect from the method of representation adopted for minority communities, such as the Muslims, by means of separate communal electorates. The depressed classes would remain a part of the Hindu community and would vote with the Hindu electorate on an equal footing, but for the first twenty years would have 'the means of safeguarding their rights and interests that we are convinced is necessary under present conditions'. The Government decision stood, and only the agreement of the communities themselves could substitute other electoral arrangements for those devised.

Mr. Gandhi replied on the following day that he was compelled reluctantly to adhere to his decision to fast. Facilities were given for discussions with him by political leaders both of the caste Hindus and of the depressed classes. In pursuing this plan Mr. Gandhi was bringing into the modern political sphere an old Hindu custom of sitting *dharna*—sitting without food or drink at the door of a house in pursuance of a demand or claim, so that the

guilt of the suitor's death might be upon the head of the individual refusing his plea.

Before Mr. Gandhi's fast began on 20 September there had been anxious discussions between some Hindu political leaders and those of the depressed classes, on whose behalf Dr. Ambedkar asked high terms. Negotiations were continued with feverish zeal, and at Poona on 24 September a compromise was reached and approved by Mr. Gandhi. It provided for the absorption of the 71 special constituencies for the depressed classes into the general constituencies in return for the reservation of no less than 148 general seats for the community. The compromise also provided for primary electoral colleges in which the depressed classes would select candidates for the reserved seats, and contained other proposals for meeting their claims.

The agreement was sent to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for confirmation. This was promptly accorded to the main change, while judgement was reserved on the points outside the scope of the award; for these raised issues which were still under consideration and on which no piecemeal conclusion could be reached. Mr. Gandhi had said that the compromise must be accepted *in toto* by Government before he took food, but he accepted this partial endorsement and on the seventh day broke his fast. By his action he had forced the hands not of His Majesty's Government, but of the caste Hindus who in his own words had consigned the depressed classes for centuries to 'crushing degradation'. To this end he abandoned the *non possumus* attitude he had taken at the Round Table Conference, where he had repeatedly declared that there must be no reservation of seats for the depressed classes, and that, with the exception of the Muslims and Sikhs, 'Congress will be no party to special reservation or special electorates for any other minorities'.

The politically-minded caste Hindus were now face to face with the problem of the grievances of the depressed classes; but in some influential orthodox circles there was much misgiving, and efforts of outcastes to gain admission to well-known temples were repulsed. Mr. Gandhi intimated that he would renew his fast if the caste Hindus did not show themselves to be in earnest in the removal of disabilities.

The arrangements for the third [1] Round Table Conference in London were made in October. The Conference consists of thirty-four delegates from India and twelve members of the British Houses of Parliament. Of the Indian delegates twelve represent the Indian States, and the others are from British India. The report to the Government of India of the Indian delegation under the chairmanship of Sir Atul Chatterjee at the Imperial Economic Conference at Ottawa was also published in October. The fact that the far-reaching Trade Agreement there made with the British Government was to be submitted to the Indian Legislature for ratification at a special session at Delhi in November illustrates the remarkable development in recent years of India's interimperial and international status, freely accorded by the British Government. A signatory to the Paris peace treaty of 1919, India is an original member of the League of Nations with the same rights as any other member State. She has been able to pursue an independent line of action within very wide limits, even when her delegates have differed markedly from the views of British delegations. In the words of an India Office memorandum to the Statutory Commission in 1929, 'it has been the deliberate object of the Secretary of State to make India's new status a reality for practical purposes within the widest possible limits'. This has had a valuable effect in stimulating her national self-consciousness,

[1] See p. 311.

and has laid the foundations of an informed public interest in international affairs.

The story recorded in the foregoing pages shows how many and conflicting are the political forces working in India at the present momentous stage in her relations with Great Britain. The Indian National Congress has necessarily filled a conspicuous place in the narrative, and its decline from constitutionalism has been traced in Chapter III. Although by means of its widespread agencies and financial resources the Congress is by far the most effective political organization in the country, it has alienated much support by its destructive methods and the lawless social and economic pressure it seeks to bring upon those who do not accept its subversive creed. On the other hand, it has gained influence by the reverence in which Mr. Gandhi is held among the Hindu masses, and by the promise of relief from hardships held out by agitators to a peasantry sorely tried by the economic depression.

The policy of the Hindu Mahasabha (the orthodox politicians) has been to join hands with the Congress in promoting *swaraj*, but to go against the older body in pursuance of an aggressively communal ideal and outlook. The Mahasabha has been strengthening its organization for the purpose of capturing seats in the new legislatures. It would be a great misconception, however, to regard the whole of the Hindu peoples as actuated by extreme politico-religious aims. The masses know little of such aims, though they can be incited against authority by skilful agitation. The depressed classes stand apart from Congress and Mahasabha activities in the effort to overcome their 'birth's invidious bar' and to take their place in the ranks of free Indian citizenship. Moreover, some of the political parties mainly confined to the provincial sphere and promoted more or less on communal lines—

notably the Justice or non-Brahmin Party in Madras and the Central Provinces—are amongst the supporters of reasoned advance in place of the Congress application of the philosophy of force to the problems of politics.

The Indian Liberal Federation is the principal association of what used to be known as the moderate party. A much smaller and more loosely knit organization than Congress, it has among its adherents a large proportion of distinguished public men. The Liberals are strongly nationalist in their outlook, and though they parted company with the Congress on questions of method at the time of the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, differences in aim have become fundamental only since the larger body declared 'independence' to be its objective. The Liberals may be very critical of the Indian administration on present lines, but they hold the view that India can become a self-governing nation more naturally and rapidly within the framework of the British commonwealth of nations than outside.

From this centre opinion there are wide divergencies. At one end of the scale we have in Bengal endemically, and in some other provinces sporadically, a frankly revolutionary element out to overthrow authority, and paying little or no attention to problems of constitutional development. Next to them stand large numbers of young men—some of them within the ranks of the Congress—who have been infected with communistic ideas. On the other side there are many forces and interests, in addition to those already indicated, opposed to a policy of subversion; and if they could be welded together by some great leader, they would be found to represent a markedly preponderant element in the body politic.

The great Muslim community, in sight of impending constitutional advance, has shown a remarkable degree

of solidarity both in opposing the 1930 and 1932 civil disobedience movements, and in claiming the protection of communal interests by means of constitutional safeguards. This solidarity has been modified by the menace of the Red Shirt movement on the Frontier, and the existence of a school of thought chiefly among the younger Muslims which cherishes the ideal of coming to an understanding with the Congress. There can be no doubt that the great majority of Muslims were fairly content with the communal award, and will continue to press for the acceptance of their full programme of safeguards.

While technically outside the play of party politics in British India, the Indian States are profoundly affected thereby, as shown in Chapter XIV. They are ranged on the side of conservatism, though not oblivious to the need for advance. Such minorities in British India as the Europeans, the Anglo-Indians, and Indian Christians are supporters of ordered progress and the British connexion, as are many interests not limited in their outlook by racial or religious affinities. Foremost in this category are the land-holding classes. They have no organization of an all-India character, but provincial associations are fairly active in upholding their claims and watching their interests.

In the welter of parties in India, labels and groupings frequently change, but nationalist sentiment and communal feeling remain the dominant forces of Indian political thought. Differences of race, religion, and culture are the real and fundamental factors in Indian life, and the history recorded in these pages has shown that it is impossible to escape their hold on political developments. They will continue dominant until influences already discernible take more definite shape and parties are formed on the basis of general interests to which religious and social differences are made subordinate.

INDEX